

Comp. Rel.

239

C. Relig.

Class

PT 74

Book

University of Chicago Library

GIVEN BY

Besides the main topic this book also treats of

Subject No.

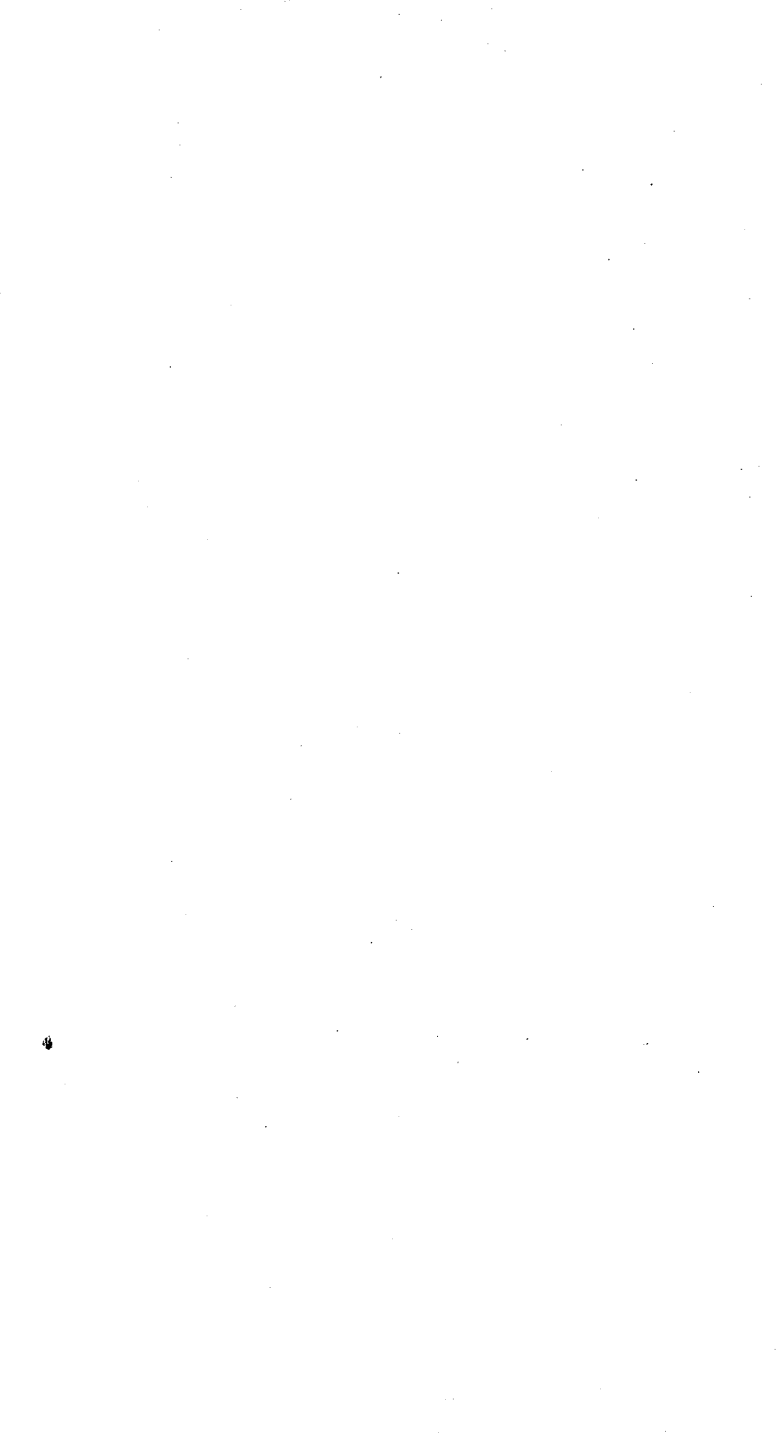
On page

Subject No.

On page

--	--	--	--





RATIONAL RELIGION

~~239~~
~~R174~~

RATIONAL RELIGION

SOME ADDRESSES TO MEN

BY
THE REV. H. ^{erhart} THEODORE KNIGHT, M.A.
ASSISTANT CURATE, ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, SEVENOAKS

RIVINGTONS
34 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN
LONDON

1903

YTOO JHT
TO MO
YHAFBU OOAQHO

BX5133
K7 R2
1903

229105

PATRI
PRIMITIAS

"Seeing that Jews ask for Signs, and Greeks seek after Wisdom; but we preach a crucified Messiah, unto Jews a stumbling block and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto the called themselves, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God."—1 Cor. i. 22, 23, 24.

PREFACE

THE following addresses have been printed at the request of some of those who heard them delivered. I have called them "Addresses to Men," because several were given at services for men only. Such an expedient is far from an ideal. Yet I think that it may be often productive of good, especially if the lectures in church can be followed by a conference elsewhere. Even to an ordinary congregation, however, an occasional series of "apologetic" discourses is not out of place. I am sure that many of the parochial clergy are living in something of a "fools' Paradise," and are altogether unaware of the extent to which the minds of their parishioners have been unsettled by the Biblical criticism no less than by the scientific knowledge of

to-day. If such subjects are discussed only before special audiences, the impression is apt to get abroad that the clergy are lacking in courage, if not in honesty, and that they hold an esoteric doctrine for the initiated. The warning against "offending a little one" who believes, is not the only warning in the Bible. To deal frankly with the Word of God is not to create intellectual disturbance, but to allay it. The sense of bewilderment is already amongst us. And it is, I think, the duty of the parochial Ministry, not only to forestall it in the coming generation, but to give no grounds in any public teaching for the charge of insincerity.

I have re-cast my addresses for publication. Essays are perhaps more readable than sermons. And I have added three Appendices, in order to exhibit something of the "Higher Criticism" of the Bible, and also in order to extend and substantiate the argument underlying the four lectures upon Miracles. I have generally avoided the use of a method of negations. To rebut

destructive arguments is by far the lesser half of all apology. Truth which is merely defensive

“Hath lost hold on God.”

And therefore I have tried to be positive and constructive in each series of addresses. My subjects are indeed familiar topics of the pulpit. For I do not profess to be aiming at the conventional unbeliever, but simply at that large number of persons, inside as well as outside of the average congregation, whose ideas about religion have been “loosened,” and who are yet not unready to welcome an attempt at a rational presentation of the Gospel.

My obligations to others will be apparent on every page. I have nothing original to offer. I have but tried to popularise certain arguments and interpretations which modern theology has given us. I take the opportunity here of recording the immensity of my debt to the late B. F. Westcott, and the late F. D. Maurice—the greatest prophets of this and the last generation—and also to the late Aubrey L.

Moore. Amongst living theologians I cannot refrain from mentioning Dr. Gore, the Bishop of Worcester, and the Rev. J. R. Illingworth, together with the Dean of Ely and the Archdeacon of Manchester. I have also to thank my friend, the Rev. W. C. Allen, of Exeter College, for his kindness in reading over the manuscript of my book, and for his criticisms. It is at his suggestion that the third Appendix has been added, and it has had the benefit of his revision.

H. T. K.

SEVENOAKS, KENT,

July, 1903.

CONTENTS

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

	PAGE
I. THE BOOK OF GENESIS	3
II. THE STORY OF CREATION	19
III. THE FALL OF HUMANITY	37

MIRACLES

I. THEIR AUTHORITY	57
II. THEIR CREDIBILITY	72
III. THEIR INTERPRETATION	86
IV. THEIR SIGNIFICANCE	102

SOCIALISM AND THE PATERNOSTER

I. THE DIVINE IDEAL	121
II. HUMAN PROGRESS	137
III. INDUSTRIAL ORDER	155
IV. THE CATHOLIC GOSPEL	169

THE ADVENT DOCTRINES

	PAGE
I. DEATH, A MORAL CONDITION	187
II. JUDGMENT, A NATIONAL FACT	204
III. HELL, A SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE	221
IV. HEAVEN, A CIVIC REALITY	240

APPENDIX I.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE HEXATEUCH	259
--	-----

APPENDIX II.

NATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL	262
---------------------------------------	-----

APPENDIX III.

MODERN CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	274
---	-----

65

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE

I

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning."—ROMANS x. 4.

ON the three Sundays that immediately precede the season of Lent, the Church has appointed the introductory chapters of the Book of Genesis to be read in her public worship at Mattins and Evensong. The title of the book, as you know, is derived from the Septuagint. It means "becoming," or "origin," or "birth." And the chapters tell the story of how the universe and its inhabitants came into being. But if you are at all familiar with the data of modern scientific knowledge, you are well aware that the revelation of science appears to be here very different from that of the Bible. You know that during the last century the progress of geological and astronomical, and especially of biological, science has profoundly altered our conception of the Genesis of all things; while the ideas that are associated with the term "evolution," have produced a vast change in every department of human thought. And, knowing

this, these introductory chapters of the Bible present to many of you a difficulty—a difficulty that recurs afresh year by year, as the Preface of the Book is read to you in the cycle of the Church's Lectionary. To some, perhaps, the subject has caused no trouble. Yet I must ask such persons to believe that the problem is real to many of their fellows. And I trust that, in proportion to the value they set upon the virtue of mental honesty, they will approve the effort to handle the topic frankly. On the other hand, those of you who have experienced a feeling of uncertainty and distress about the matter, may welcome an attempt to indicate the solution of the difficulty by one who is trying to be a believer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

No apology, then, is needed for my choice of subject. We are all children of the age in which we live—an age which will always be memorable for its scientific character, and for the revolution which physical science has produced in the furniture of the human intellect no less than in the material fabric of society. We cannot escape beyond the limits of the scientific atmosphere, which has penetrated from the chairs of the academic scientists, through popular handbooks and lecture-halls, not only into the West-End clubs and mansions, but into the suburban villas and the factories and workshops of every industrial town. Echoes of past conflicts between science and the Bible are still sounding in our midst. And the minister of the

Gospel who neglects to deal with the situation is shirking a solemn responsibility. For if the professional exponents of Holy Writ continue to keep silence, they leave men to be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine," and to draw their own conclusions as best they may. For example, a man who has been familiar from childhood only with the traditional interpretation of the Book of Genesis, suddenly finds himself brought face to face with modern scientific thought. By degrees, he drifts into a position, if not of open antagonism, at least of languid indifference to religion. Perhaps he feels that, since eminent scientists are to be found among the members of the Christian Church, there may be much that is of value in her faith. But he has learnt for himself that the introductory chapters of the Bible are not true to positive fact; and so he begins to doubt the truth of all God's Revelation of Himself. Others hesitate to abandon the traditional interpretation of the Book. Having heard something about the results of modern science, they do not care to pursue their investigations to a conclusion that is logically consistent. They begin to consign the material of their knowledge to separate compartments of the brain; and, after placing the Bible in one room and science in another, they close the door between them. Or else, in a desperate wish to avoid a position of intellectual suicide, they "wrest the Scriptures" with painful ingenuity; and, by reading the latest discoveries of science into the text of the Bible, try

to prove that the early chapters of Genesis are not really at variance with modern knowledge.

Such attitudes, I cannot but think, are disastrous in the extreme. If it is just to say that

“Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,”

it is equally true that

“These reciprocate on those again.”

Our mental attitude is a thing of intense moral significance. Life without loyalty to conviction is barren and petty, and we have no right to acquiesce in a divorce between our faith and our reason. Truth cannot be left embalmed in pious phraseology. If the Gospel is to be a Gospel, it must be welcomed with enthusiastic devotion by heart and mind alike. At all costs, therefore, we must be honest. If we care nothing for intellectual probity, we are no true students of the Truth—whether we be students of science or of Holy Writ.

For science and the Bible are not foes but friends. There is no need to “reconcile” (as people term it) the claims of each. Truth is one. And we who are Christians believe that He Who is the Truth has so revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ—the Divine Personality of the Incarnate Son—that we may discern in Him the unity of all things. He is “the Word of God,” the Agent in all communication between Heaven and earth, the Eternal Instrument of the Divine Energy in all the world. The laws of Nature which science reveals to us are not only

the laws of God, but are also a manifestation of the activity of Him Who is Immanent in the entire universe of matter. Behind all physical phenomena lies the Personality of "Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things." Thus in modern science we discover a friend indeed. While we who are Christians recognize in Nature the garment of God's Word, we recognize in the results of scientific inquiry an unfolding of His Glory. There can be no real war between science and the Bible. The fight commenced only because each failed to see what the other was. It is ceasing now that the smoke of battle has begun to rise, and the combatants are beginning to realise that they are intended to be allies in a joint campaign against ignorance and unbelief and superstition. The prospect, indeed, is full of hope. Surely the days of mutual misconception are numbered. Theology, I think, has learnt the lesson, and science too is learning it. If the story of Galileo is ever a warning to the theologian, the story of George Romanes is an encouragement.

And now we must pass to the Book itself. As you read the introductory chapters, you cannot fail to be struck with certain literary and historical peculiarities which they exhibit. A slight study of the English text will bring to your notice some obvious repetitions and discrepancies and contradictions. There are two accounts, for example, of the creation of man, the one contained in the first chapter and the other in the second. In the former,

God is said to have made man, both "male and female," on the last day of the Creation; while the second passage—omitting any reference to the six days of God's workmanship—says that man was made before plant or animal, and describes the birth of Eve as the last of all His works. And the opening verses of the fifth chapter repeat in a summary form the earlier account. The reader is sure to mark also the iteration of the phrase, "these are the generations"—by which the narrative is brought down systematically from Adam to Noah and his sons, and from Shem to Terah, the father of Abram. The story of the Deluge, too, is manifestly confused. At one time, Noah is instructed to take into the ark seven of every "clean" animal and two of those which are "not clean;" and then, in another passage, he is bidden to preserve "two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life." And the Flood itself is said in two separate verses to have lasted forty days and forty nights, while a third gives to it a duration of a hundred and fifty days. The conclusion is obvious. The chapters we are studying cannot all have been written by the same hand. Although we may have no knowledge of the Hebrew text, an attentive perusal of the English shows that we are reading a composite production. To the Hebrew scholars, therefore, we now must turn.

Modern criticism of the Old Testament is practically a growth of the last hundred years. A few students in France and Germany had previously

attempted to form a conjecture about the materials employed by the author of the Book of Genesis. But a new epoch in the study of Hebrew was inaugurated by Gesenius at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and his labours paved the way for a series of men of brilliant intellect who have devoted themselves to the elucidation of the ancient literature of the Jews. If the Germans were the first in the field, the English-speaking scholars are now as numerous and as able as their Continental brethren. Of course, it has been urged that some of the "Higher Critics" have gone too far. In Germany especially they seem to have started with certain philosophic preconceptions, which have militated against their general candour and given an obvious bias to their conclusions. But in England, as a rule, the critics have not been out of sympathy with the historic Gospel of the Church. And their verdict upon the literature of the Hebrews is in no sense antagonistic to the belief of Christendom, that in the Old Testament we have a genuine Revelation. It is with the form—and not with the fact—of God's Apocalypse of Himself to His ancient people, that modern criticism is concerned. Nor can we feel anything but gratitude for its results. In the un-failing Providence of God, while science has been adding to our knowledge of the Genesis of all things, scholarship has been disclosing the Genesis of the Hebrew Bible. Heartily do we welcome the aid of each. The information which we derive from the

critics is a valuable supplement to the knowledge obtained from modern science: for the unscientific character of the Jewish records is now easy to explain. Let me try to put before you, very briefly indeed, the general verdict of the Higher Criticism upon the literary structure of the Book of Genesis and upon the features and date of its component elements.¹ My information is mainly derived from Canon Driver, the Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford.

Like other of the early books of the Old Testament, Genesis is a compilation. A critical analysis of the Hebrew text reveals the presence of several documents, which are distinguishable from one another by marked difference of language and style. And the discrepancies which we notice in the English version are explained by a recognition of the sections assigned to the various documents. Scholarship has thus solved the difficulties of the English reader. For several of the varieties of language and style detected by the critic, occur in passages that coincide with those in which we can all perceive an obvious difference of treatment. Of course, experts will always disagree. With regard to questions of literary criticism, the judgment of one scholar cannot be expected to harmonise exactly with that of another. But there is a striking unanimity of expert opinion about the documentary elements out of which the introductory chapters of Genesis have been

¹ *Vide* Appendix I. p. 259.

constructed. Except in details of quite a minor importance, all critics worthy of the name are agreed in the lines of linguistic stratification which they find embedded in the present text. Indeed, the only matter of valid controversy nowadays is the question of the dates at which the several documents may be held to have originated, and to have been compiled by degrees into the extant form of the narrative. The literary strata are apparent: their age is not so easy to determine. And the problem is one of Biblical Archæology as much as of Biblical Criticism. The majority of experts maintain that the process of literary construction did not begin until the era of the Monarchy, and that it probably continued into the period that elapses between the Old and the New Testaments.

The story of the Book may be told as follows. Speaking broadly, two stages in its compilation can be traced. The first witnessed the production of two narratives, similar in their general style and in the material with which they deal. A remarkable peculiarity of language, however, distinguishes the one from the other. For the Deity was popularly known to the Hebrews under two titles, "Jehovah" and "Elohim," the former being more especially the Name of the God of Revelation. And while the author of the one narrative employed the term "Jehovah" for God, "Elohim" was the favourite title of the other. The two documents are, therefore, generally designated by the letters "J" and "E." They

were probably composed by members of the Schools of the Prophets, which began to flourish after the establishment of the Hebrew Monarchy. J may have been written in the ninth century, and is probably the earlier of the pair. It is however certain that neither can be later than 750 B.C., and Professor Driver considers that "a date in the early centuries of the Monarchy would seem to be not unsuitable" for both. The unity of the Hebrew state had already been broken. While the author of E was evidently a native of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, J was probably written by a loyal Southerner. Nor is it at all unlikely that the two narratives, parallel as they undoubtedly are, and yet manifestly independent, "represent the special form which tradition assumed in each" of the two localities. For the material with which they deal is largely traditional. In the epoch of the early Monarchy, an historian would find but few written sources of information. Sundry collections of religious laws and national military ballads have been evidently utilised, fragments of which may have come down from the age of Moses. But the data of the authors were chiefly the floating traditions of their nation—stories attached to names and places famous in the days of old—which they have thrown into the form of two continuous records. Afterwards, at some date between the times of Isaiah and Jeremiah, this pair of "prophetical" documents was fused into a composite product, now known as "JE;" which is one of the main elements of the present book.

Then, the second stage in the history of Genesis introduces a further narrative to our notice. Its compiler prefers the term "Elohim" for the Deity; but from the fact that he was a member of the Jewish Priesthood, it has been usually designated by the letter "P." It differs from the earlier composite document, not only in style, but also in the subject-matter with which it deals, and in the general scope and purpose of the writer. While JE is picturesque and popular, P is formal and measured and precise. Tabulated genealogies and details of chronological and ritualistic interest are given by the author in full. Looking at the past from a priest's standpoint, the institutions of the Jewish Church are to him the things of greatest moment. And, in dealing with his materials, his chief aim—in the words of Professor Driver—"is to present an ideal picture of the Mosaic Age, constructed indeed upon a genuine traditional basis, but so conceived as to exemplify the principles by which the Theocracy should be regulated." This document is evidently of a much later date than the former. Some critics have maintained that it was written by Ezekiel, who was a priest as well as a prophet. It cannot at least belong to an earlier age; and scholars generally assign its composition to the period of the exile, when the enforced leisure of the priesthood turned their minds to literary labour. And our present text is a combination of the earlier composite narrative with this later record. It was made about the time of Ezra. The last compiler—

who may have been Ezra himself—has evidently taken P as the framework of his Book. The phrase, “these are the generations,” is characteristic of the author of P, and its recurrence unfolds a unity of plan that underlies the extant narrative. Frequent and lengthy passages from JE were inserted by the final redactor into the sacerdotal “Grundschrift.” By a method which has been described as that of “an editor with paste and scissors”—a method of selective incorporation—he produced at last the Hebrew text which now stands at the opening of the Jewish Scriptures.

Such, in briefest outline, is the story which is told us by modern criticism. But a further question remains. And although my two subsequent addresses, I trust, will throw further light upon the validity of the answer, I must indicate the reply to-day. As we have now seen, the Book of Genesis is not a Book of Moses at all. It is emphatically a composite product. It contains diverse versions of Hebrew folk-lore and tradition, committed to writing by unknown authors at varying epochs in Jewish history. The process of its compilation lasted from the early days of the Monarchy to the time at least of the return of the Jews from exile. Its original documents have been re-edited from time to time, and it has reached its present form after several stages of literary redaction. Wherein, then, resides its Inspiration? In what sense can we speak of the Book as being inspired?

Well, as Canon Driver has said, "criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament: it *presupposes* it." We who are Churchmen believe profoundly in the reality of Biblical Inspiration. Yet the fact in which we believe is not primarily an external, but an internal fact. The Catholic Church has never expressly formulated an authoritative theory of inspiration. She has told us, in the Confession of faith named after the Nicene Council, that it was the Holy Ghost, the Lord, Who "spake by the Prophets"; and by her recognition of the Jewish Bible, as well as by the gradual formulation of her own Canon, she has indicated her belief that He also spoke by all the other authors of her sacred Scriptures. But she has said no more. And is it not all that we really want to know? It is enough to be assured that He Who did breathe upon the writers of the Old Testament, is He Whom the Father has now sent to dwell within the Church of His Only-Begotten Son, without having to define in formal detail the exact result of His activity. A frank recognition of the earthly and the human, in the literary construction of the Bible, does not imply a negation of the presence of the Heavenly and the divine. On the contrary, it brings God's operations nearer to the minds of men. An inspired writer is never an automaton. The influence of God's Spirit does not abolish the necessary limitations of human personality. Even in those districts of Biblical

literature where the flood of Inspiration is felt by all readers to have risen to its highest level—in the writings of the Apostles Paul and John—the impress of the author's mind and character is distinctly seen. And the preface which Luke the Evangelist has set to his record of the Gospel, shows clearly his dependence upon ordinary methods of work. Inspiration, though it differs in degree, is always the same in essence. It does not involve a mechanical dictation of words and sentences. It simply means the illuminative Presence of the Holy Ghost. And, if the Old Testament is less full of the Breath of Heaven than the New, the divine mode of influence is unchanged from Genesis to Revelation. Modern criticism of Holy Scripture has but laid bare the historical conditions of its activity.

And it is clear that the Spirit of God has been at work upon the unknown authors of the Book of Genesis. Down all the centuries of Jewish history a knowledge of God was ever growing among the chosen race. Prophets and priests and poets were winning a fuller insight into Truth. The traditions shared by the children of Israel in common with other nations of antiquity, received among the Hebrews a distinctive colouring and dress. Their own legends assumed by degrees a form consistent with an "Ethical Monotheism," which is unique among the Semites. For the God of Israel "took the initiative" in disclosing His character to His own people. When the Jewish historians began to compile their records,

the materials that floated around them were being moulded by the voice of prophecy, which underlay all the growth of their national religion. And the vision of the Truth, which was gradually dawning upon the Hebrew race, was not without effect upon the minds of the compilers of their Scriptures. It was in the light of an increasing insight into God that they prepared their narratives, and thus gave to them a value for the Christian Church. In a word, the inspiration of the Book of Genesis—as of all the Bible—lies in that which it can tell us about the Moral Character of God.

Yes, we who are Christians believe in the reality of Hebrew Inspiration, because we believe in Him Who “spake” by the Hebrew prophets. But we do not require to identify such a fact with some theoretic interpretation devised by human wit. Indeed, attempts made in the past to formulate the doctrine of Inspiration have been productive of much injury. If it is a truism to say that Christianity is a belief in Jesus Christ, it is a truism that has largely been forgotten. A worship of the letter that killeth has made the literary record of His Revelation cheerless and uninviting to a mind that is aglow with the warmth of modern thought. Men are not unwilling to believe. But they have been given a stone for bread. The literal infallibility of the Bible is still frequently put before them as the Evangel of the Church; and they turn away, in anger or in sorrow, unable to renounce their intellectual allegiance to what they know

of science or of Biblical Criticism and Archæology. The nemesis of all idolatry has come. Men's minds are restless, their convictions weak, their faith unstable. They cannot find a rock on which to build. And souls are starving, unconscious that the food which they require is still as available as ever. Nor is the blame for their bewilderment to be laid at the door of the Higher Critics. As Professor G. Adam Smith has justly said, "Those who have been led into unbelief by modern criticism are not for one moment to be compared in number with those who have fallen from faith over the edge of the opposite extreme. The theory of a verbal inspiration, the dogma of the equal divinity of all parts of Scripture, the refusal to see any development either from the ethnic religions to the faith of Israel or within the religion of Israel itself—all these have had a disastrous influence upon the religious thought and action of our time. They have not only paralysed the intellects of those who have adopted them, as every mechanical conception of the truth must do ; but they have been the provocation to immense numbers of honest hearts to cast off religion altogether." This is, indeed, one of "the great and tragic commonplaces" of to-day. And it is because the situation is reproachful to the Church's Ministry, that I invite you to reconsider its bearings, and to see the falsity of our present distress. Our misunderstandings about the Word of God are as unfortunate alike for the Church and for the world, as they are truly pathetic to the angels.

II

THE STORY OF CREATION

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.”—HEBREWS xi. 3.

THE Higher Criticism of the Old Testament has sometimes been represented by its opponents as if it were purely a matter of literary taste. The analysis of documents, being dependent upon the individual judgment of some few Hebraists, has been said to be a precarious method of establishing definite conclusions; and some have even predicted that the “attack” of the Higher Critics upon the Old Testament will be as barren of ultimate result, as that which was made upon the New Testament by the Tübingen School of last century. But such a prophecy is based upon a misunderstanding of the situation. The method of modern criticism “is not *à priori*: the argument is inductive, and the facts are furnished by the Old Testament itself.” We who are English readers can see for ourselves the positive anomalies of fact in the text of the Old Testament, and the Hebrew scholar does but corroborate the verdict of

our common sense. Besides, the Higher Criticism is not merely concerned with textual analysis. It is also historical. If the primary portion of its task is to disentangle documents, it has also to go on to prove their veracity. When a narrative has been reduced to literary coherence, it has still to justify itself at the bar of history. And this is the function of Biblical Archæology. Now, the Book of Genesis is not only a compilation, but its contents are mainly traditional. It is a collection of the ancient legends of the Jews. Of course, a story which is devoid of historical accuracy ought not therefore to be held to be essentially untrue. Truth of idea is not the same thing as truth of fact. It is imperative, however, to inquire briefly where the Hebrew traditions begin to be substantiated by authentic evidence.

For all the elements of truth contained in the early chapters of Genesis are of an ideal character. The critical historian requires the evidence of contemporaries. Abraham may well be a title which discloses an historic personality. But it is quite certain that he is the first whom we encounter in the Old Testament. The patriarchal era down to the time of the Exodus is essentially prehistoric. Not until the age of David, or at least the age of Samuel—the age at which the literary activity of the Hebrews began to be considerable—can their historical records produce in detail a feeling of confidence in the reader. The period of about a thousand years that elapses between Abraham and Moses may

be described as the twilight of Jewish history. Every race has its own traditions about its ancestors. History always fades backward into legend. And the Hebrews form no exception among the nations of the world. Many an event recorded of the Father of the Jews and his successors is not necessarily an authentic fact. The story of Joseph, for example, seems to be largely the Hebrew adaptation of an Egyptian romance. Names of places and persons are frequently explained by an incident that is referred back to one of the patriarchs or judges. Moses is represented as the author of many regulations which did not originate until several centuries after his decease. Local ruins and customs are attributed to some deed wrought by one of the heroic figures of the past. Down to the era of the Monarchy there is much that is uncertain, because it is uncertifiable. Yet, in the twilight, the critical historian detects an outline that is manifestly true. If the story of the Hebrews is intertwined with many a legend, still he can trace the undoubted facts of their migration, their escape from Egypt, and their gradual settlement in the promised land. He merely reminds us that we must hesitate before we accept, in fullest detail, the testimony of writings which belong to a later age. What Niebuhr and Mommsen did for the legends of early Rome, modern criticism has done for those of the primitive Hebrews. We can no longer give implicit credit to all the stories that are told about their "eponymous heroes."

It is impossible, however, to draw an absolute line of demarcation between the history and the legends of the Jews. As in the case of many another nation, the mixture of fact and fancy is such that each student will always be able to put his own interpretation upon the data supplied by linguistic and archæological inquiry—an interpretation which will depend upon his intellectual temperament as well as upon his positive knowledge of the facts. To me it seems not unlikely that the Father of the Jews is an authentic figure. The nomadic tribe would require the guidance of some such chieftain as the "Arab Sheik." And when we reach the time of Abraham and his sons, perhaps we can just begin to feel the bed-rock of history beneath our feet. The earlier portion of Genesis, however, is of a different stamp. The dozen chapters that precede the biography of Abraham contain no materials for the historian. Anthropologists tell us that in many countries legends spring from a memory of previous inhabitants, who were gradually extirpated, or perhaps overwhelmed by some catastrophe. Nevertheless, there is no real history to be extracted from the preface of the Book of Genesis. Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and his sons, are wholly ideal personages; while the stories that encircle them are but the Jewish versions of Semitic myths. No vestige of historical fact underlies them. And the Epic of Creation, with which they open, finds its counterpart in the primitive legends of other lands. Many a nation has its "Book

of Origins"—its account, written or unwritten, of the Genesis of all things. In the religions of antiquity there are several "Cosmogonies"—pictures in which the problem of the Origin of the Universe has received a solution from the eye of faith. All over the globe we find stories of Creation, which have been shaped by theological imagination or poetic fancy. Parallels to the Hebrew tale may be discovered far and wide in the religions that still hold their ground among the heathen, as well as in the mythologies of the ancient world. But, while the Biblical story has a general affinity to many others, it is more directly related to the prehistoric legends of Babylonia. Beyond the river Euphrates lay one of the great centres of ancient civilization, with which the Jews were brought into close intimacy by their national exile. And so, before we pass on to consider the Christian idea of the Creation, I shall try to indicate shortly the relation of the Biblical tale to the ancient Cosmogony of Chaldæa.

Now, until comparatively recent times, the Chaldæan Cosmogony was known to us only through some fragments of a Babylonian chronicler and from some desultory allusions in Greek literature. And the information was too scanty to enable scholars to reach any definite conclusion. But, some years ago, the library of Assurbanipal—the famous King of Assyria—was excavated at Kouyunjik, and its treasures were brought to England and deposited in the British Museum. Assurbanipal's books are

cylindrical tablets of clay, covered with markings which for a time baffled the skill of Oriental archaeologists. At last, however, the key was found, and "the Cuneiform Inscriptions," as they are termed, were gradually deciphered. A discovery of great importance had been made. For a great epic poem had been unearthed, which described the Creation of the Universe as taking place in seven acts, recorded on seven tablets, of which the second and sixth are still missing. Let me quote the words of Dr. Ryle: "From the first tablet we learn that in the beginning there existed only watery chaos, out of which sprang the primal gods, Lakhmu and Lakhamu; then Ansar and Kisar, the upper and lower firmament; then the Assyrian gods—Anu, god of the sky, Bel, god of the spirits, and Ea, god of the waters. The third and fourth tablets record the creation of light, which was represented in the victory of Merodach, son of Ea, over Tiamat; while out of the skin of the slaughtered serpent, Tiamat, was constructed the wide expanse of the heavens, the dwelling-place of the three Assyrian gods. The fifth tablet tells how the sun and moon and stars were implanted in the sky, and received divine command to regulate the succession of times and seasons, of days and years. The sixth tablet—which has not yet been found—probably recorded the formation of the earth, and the creation of the vegetable world, of birds and fishes. The seventh and last tells how the cattle and the larger beasts and all creeping things were made. Unfortunately,

the latter part is much mutilated, and the description of the formation of man has not survived.”¹

There is an obvious similarity between the story of Creation which is contained in these tablets of clay, and the Cosmogony of the Hebrew Scriptures. Although set in a light which is wholly different, the Babylonian epic—Professor Sayce remarks—“bears a striking resemblance to the account given in the first chapter of Genesis. In each case, the history of the Creation is divided into seven successive acts. In each case, the present world has been preceded by a watery chaos. In fact, the self-same word is used for this chaos in both the Biblical and the Assyrian accounts—the only difference being that, in the Chaldæan story, the ‘deep’ has become a mythological personage, the mother of a chaotic brood. The order of the creation, moreover, agrees in the two accounts: first the light, then the creation of the firmament of heaven, subsequently the appointment of the celestial bodies ‘for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years,’ and next the creation of ‘beasts and creeping things.’”

Nor does this remarkable discovery stand alone among the recent additions to our knowledge of the ancient legends of the lands beyond the river Euphrates. The fragments of yet a second Cosmogony have been brought to light. Among the contents of Assurbanipal’s library have been found

¹ Quite recently, however, a further fragment has been found, which probably contains an account of the Genesis of the human race.

two mutilated tablets, which give another account of the Creation. They profess to be the copies of an older story, which had been obtained from Cutha in Babylonia. No series of creative acts is recorded: the children of Chaos are said to have been destroyed by the god of Cutha, who then created the human race. This Cosmogony appears to be of a much earlier date than the other, and Professor Sayce assigns it to an age prior even to that of Abraham. It is difficult, however, to date with much confidence any of the volumes found in the library of Assurbanipal. Tablets of clay are not like modern books, which add the year of publication to the author's name. Assurbanipal's reign belongs to the seventh century—to a time midway between the captivity of the Northern and the Southern of the Jewish Kingdoms. But the legends would have long been current as a tradition before they were committed to the tablets. So, "placing the cuneiform legends of the Creation side by side," Dr. Ryle is "inclined to surmise that, in remote times there existed in Assyria and Babylonia, several varying traditions about the Creation; but that, in later days, under the influence of a more systematic theology or a more philosophical religion, the various legends received a final form in the grouping of the seven Tablets of Creation—the number seven being probably selected because it was a holy number in Assyria."

What, then, is the relation of the Biblical Story of Creation to the Chaldæan Cosmogony? Briefly, it

is this. In the second chapter of Genesis, we find the relics of the primitive form of the Hebrew Cosmogony; which was probably part of their religion from the earliest times. The earlier Assyrian legend—which may have been current before the age of Abraham—bears little resemblance to it, but even less to the story contained in the first chapter. It is more than probable that the Hebrews first learnt the specific outline of their Epic during the period of their exile beyond the Euphrates. For the first chapter of Genesis belongs to the latest of the documentary elements out of which the book has been compiled. Though it stands as the preface of the Jewish Scriptures, chronologically it belongs to the appendix of the Hexateuch. It was written by a priest during the era of the Captivity. No reference to the six days of Creation can be found in earlier Jewish literature. Only two allusions to them occur, and both passages are taken from the same document as the initial chapter of Genesis itself. An earlier form of the Jewish Decalogue, contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, knows nothing of the rest of the Creator on the seventh day; and the observance of the Sabbath is enjoined, not on theological, but on purely humanitarian grounds. In fact, the Week of Creative Acts was unknown to the Israelites before their exile. Thus it seems that, when the Jewish priest began to compile the records of his fathers, he commenced by reducing the folk-lore of his people to a coherent system. Familiar with the Babylonian

legend of Creation, he borrowed its framework for his own purposes. He adapted it to the requirements of his national faith, and placed it as an introduction to his history of God's chosen race.

Such, then, is the Genesis of the Hebrew Story of Creation. Yet the tale is not a mere transcript of a pagan myth. It has been said that "a wrong idea of Creation is the fundamental error of Paganism." And the difference between the Biblical Story and that from which its final outline has been derived, is at least as striking as their resemblance. Under the pen of the inspired writer, the legend has become indeed the herald of a lofty faith. The Babylonian Cosmogony asserts the existence of several gods: the Hebrew speaks but of the One. The former regards the material universe as essentially evil: the latter knows that it is good. In the former, gods as well as men emerge from a pre-existent Chaos. But in our Book of Origins God is Himself the Eternally Pre-Existent, Who calls things into being by His Word. The Hebrew Story is thus not out of place in the earliest chapter of Holy Writ. Its moral ideas about the Creator are not "wrong." Where the Assyrian poet "saw the action of deified forces of Nature, the Hebrew writer sees only the Will of the Supreme God." And so, if it be still but a fragment of mythology, it is at least the product of a mind which is not unready to become Christian.

And now we must pass on. For a question remains, which is perhaps of greater interest than the

discoveries of archæology, and is certainly of more profound importance. If the Christian is not asked to believe in the scientific accuracy of the Hebrew Story, what does the Christian Church believe about the Creation? The idea that "in six days," the six days of the week, the Lord made Heaven and earth, is an idea borrowed, as we have seen, from the pre-historic legends of Chaldæa. And if such a statement—reiterated as it is by the Church of to-day through her use of the Jewish Decalogue—is not a statement of her faith, where is her teaching to be found? The answer is simple in the extreme. You will find a statement of the Church's belief about the Creation in the same place as you will find a statement of her belief about Inspiration. For the faith of the Catholic Church is enshrined in the Catholic Creeds. Her Gospel—as I have already reminded you—is a belief in the Person of Jesus Christ. He is the Incarnate Truth: and the scheme of doctrine that encircles His Personality, was formally embodied by the Church in the Creeds of Catholic Christendom. We who are Churchmen do claim to possess a Revelation of the Truth about Creation. But we do not find it in the speculations of Semitic mythology, but in the formularies which bear the authority of the undivided Church. We believe in God as "the Maker of Heaven and earth," as "the Maker of all things, visible and invisible:" and we believe in Jesus Christ as Him "through Whom all things were made." For He is the Eternal "Word of God," the

Word Who "was in the beginning," Who "was with God," Who "was God." And we believe that "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Of course, modern science has produced a vast change. But it has in no way altered the essence of our faith. We who are Churchmen have always believed in God as the Creator of the Universe, and in Jesus Christ as the Medium of the Creator's work. It is only our knowledge of the material context of such transcendental facts that has varied from age to age. The function of science has ever been to unfold in the physical world the Glory of Him in Whom we believe. Of late we have been learning from the scientists the How and the When and the Where of the Creation. And so the "That" of the Creation, in which we who are Christians have always believed, has been bathed in a flood of scientific sunshine. Let me show you briefly what the change has been.

A century ago it was generally thought that the account given in the preface of the Book of Genesis was substantially true to fact: that is to say, all the various sorts and kinds of things that now exist were held to have been called into being, directly, species by species, through a series of acts by the Creator. This theory had appeared in Milton's "Paradise Lost"—

"The grassy clods now calved: now half appeared
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts—then springs, as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane: the ounce,

The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks : the swift stag from underground
Bore up his branching head . . ."

It had therefore become part and parcel of the traditions of English Puritanism, and was commonly accepted even by scientific men at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then with Lamarck and Wallace and Darwin came the birth of biological science, with its great discovery that the different species of living things have not been separately called into existence, but have all come into being by a process of gradual development. And the idea of "Evolution," which originated with the biologists, soon passed into other provinces of human thought. Just as the idea of Gravitation in space was the great discovery of Newton, so the idea of Evolution in time may be said to be the great discovery of last generation ; and space and time are now conceived under a pair of scientific categories. The doctrine of Evolution appeared as the culmination of a series of revelations about the physical universe. Geology had already announced that the age of this earth of ours is far more than a million of years. Astronomy had suggested a picture of the origin of celestial systems in the nebular hypothesis. The When and the Where of the Creation seemed to be coming into view. And then Evolution stepped forward with a declaration of the How. In a word, modern science has revealed to us the method and order of the Creation. It has told us, not as a speculation, but

as an assured fact—which we can verify for ourselves by investigating that which is happening around us—that all things have come to be what they are by a process of growth and adaptation, which is going on to-day just in the same way as it has been from the beginning.

But there was a beginning. That is the ultimate mystery of which we who are Christians claim to hold the key. And it involves, as its logical correlative, that to us the physical universe is not eternal. Matter and Energy, which are the constituents of Nature's system, are the children of time as well as space. For if they are everlasting, there is no room left in the universe for a God Whom we can really worship. To postulate the eternity of some ethereal $\psi\lambda\eta$, is to abandon Theism. Pantheism is a misnomer. It is no form of Theism.¹ It is, in Mr. Illingworth's phrase, "materialism grown sentimental." He Who is Immanent in Nature must also transcend her limitations. The Eternal must be the Eternal in Himself. It is true that an Apostle can speak of God as "dwelling in light unapproachable." Yet the vesture of Deity can be in no sense a material garment: for Spirit, in its essence, is independent of everything beyond itself. If God is "the Spirit of Nature," the necessities of the human spirit compel us to believe that the objective universe of matter has had a beginning in time.

Nor is such a truth one to which we are led

¹ *Vide* p. 75 foll.

solely by the imperative of a rational Theism. It emerges also from a dogma, which is almost as characteristic of modern physics as the dogma of natural law. All the energy of Nature is one, and its sum is an invariable quantity. The powers and forces of the physical universe, interchangeable as they are with one another, constitute a total stock that is always the same. Yet, as they operate, they are dissipated and practically lost. In the process of their activity they become unavailable for future work. Nature, in fact, is slowly wasting away. She is losing her strength by the gradual diminution of the energy which she is able to utilise. The dynamic of the physical universe is growing less and less, not in actual amount, but in practical and effective value. Thus we have—in the words of Professor Clerk Maxwell—“an irreversible process always going on, at a greater or less rate, in the universe. If therefore there was ever an instant at which the whole energy of the universe was available energy, that must have been the very first instant at which the universe began to be. And if there shall ever come a time at which the whole energy of the universe has become unavailable, the history of the universe will then have reached its close. During the whole of the intervening period the available energy has been diminishing, and the unavailable increasing, by a process as irresistible as Time itself.” In other words, the world of Nature bears upon its face the marks of transience and decay. While the sum of its matter,

no less than the total of its energy, is altogether a constant quantity, the present system of the universe is essentially finite. Backwards and forwards science does but lead us to a *cul de sac*.

Thus, the Christian doctrine of the Creation is not unscientific. It transcends science, but only in order that science may be no longer nescient. As Professor Huxley has said, "Evolution does not even come into contact with Theism, considered as a philosophical doctrine;" and then he adds, "that with which it does collide, and with which it is absolutely incompatible, is the conception of creation which theological speculators have based upon the history narrated in the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis." Behind all theological misconceptions, however, the mystery of the Creation remains to challenge the intellect of the scientific Theist. Science can show us how things have evolved. Yet it always requires to postulate the initial fact. The work of physical science cannot begin until the primordial substance is already in being. How did the cosmic dust begin to be? Get back to the nebulous haze—the "Chaos" of primeval mist—and then ask the Scientists about its creation. And you will find them standing in awe and silence before a fact which they can never analyse or explain. Darwin says, "The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us." Tyndall says, "Evolution does not solve—it does not profess to solve—the ultimate mystery of the universe. It leaves, in fact, that mystery untouched." Clifford says, "Of the

beginning of the universe we know nothing at all." And Herbert Spencer says, "The production of matter out of nothing is the real mystery." Nevertheless, we who believe in Jesus Christ can see in Him the essential solution of the problem. We do profess to know something about the mysteries which the universe presents. For faith claims to be science also. The Christian doctrine of the Creation does not dissipate the clouds that veil the Genesis of the world from the human intellect; still less does it foreclose all speculation upon its philosophic truth. But it reveals to the eye of faith the transcendental secret of the fact. In the beginning God created all things through His Word.

And, *per fidem intelligimus*: "through faith we understand"—understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God. While we cannot comprehend such a fact, we can surely apprehend its rationality. For if the Universe was created to be an embodiment of God's Idea, the Christian doctrine of the Creation provides the basis of an answer—does it not?—to the question which, from the days of Plato and Aristotle, has divided the metaphysicians into two great schools of philosophic thought. The idealist and the materialist both are right. We who are Christians can see the truth that underlies each of the rival systems. For us men there is reality alike in mind and in matter, alike in thought and in things. But the Christian sees that, while the Universe is the object, the subject of the metaphysical relation is

not simply man, but God. He sees it, because he does not refuse to trust his own kinship with Deity. Within the necessary limits of human personality man is a Creator. When you read the works of some classic writer—the tragedies of Shakespeare or the poems of Browning—you speak of them justly as “creations.” They are the ideal makings of human genius. Once they existed only within the brain of the author, and then he realised his idea through the medium of language. And, similarly, the Creation of the Universe was but a realization of the Mind of a loving Father: for Love is a thing which is always ready to put limits upon itself for the sake of others. This world existed only as a Divine idea, and then it was called into concrete being through God’s Word. Eternal in the Mind of God, it has become temporal for the human race. As human thoughts find expression for themselves by human words, so too the Thought of the Divine Love found its gracious Embodiment in the Creation of the material Universe through Jesus Christ, Who is Himself the Word. For He is “the Image of the Invisible God:” and “by Him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible.” “All things were created by Him,” and also “for Him.” And He “is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”

III

THE FALL OF HUMANITY

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves ; and the truth is not in us."—I ST. JOHN i. 8.

THE Story of the Garden of Eden is, perhaps, the most familiar passage in the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. Constant reference is made to it in the Christian pulpit. And, after the great Epic of the Creation, it is undoubtedly one of the grandest sections of the preface—simple, dramatic, and profound. Yet it is here, I think, that the scientific crux of the situation is often felt to lie. Apart from all questions of literary criticism, it is thought that we are here brought face to face with an absolute antithesis between the teaching of science and of the Bible. For, men say, modern science "knows nothing" of the Fall of Man. That the universe has evolved from a primordial haze, that all things have come to be what they are by an unbroken process of development, and that humanity also, with all the varied faculties of human nature, has arisen by gradual stages from the lower creation—if all this

be true, it is felt that the Christian faith is but a delusion. For if man has been evolved into being as plants and animals have been, he is only a species of monkey after all, and we have been wrong in thinking that he was made "in the image of God." Science and the Bible are here in fatal conflict. Science says that humanity has risen : the Bible says that humanity has fallen. Science speaks of a constant growth, upward and onward, as that by which man has reached his present stage of life : the Bible asserts that he has lapsed backward from his former state. Now, this is a formidable stumbling-block to many souls. Scientists have felt the doctrine of the Fall, as derived from the Story of the garden of Eden, to be but a childish fancy. And Christians have hesitated to welcome the revelation of science, because it seemed not only to degrade man to the level of the brutes, but also to deny his need of a redemption. The Fall is surely presupposed by the Evangel of Jesus Christ. And if "Adam" be but the title of an ideal figure, and the story of his sin be merely the Hebrew copy of a prehistoric myth, has not Biblical criticism joined hands with modern science to cut away the very ground-work of our faith? Thus, our subject is one which has caused considerable difficulty to those who would gladly greet science as the youngest "handmaid" of the Gospel. It demands an attempt at a careful and honest interpretation. But before we proceed to consider what the Fall is in itself, we must turn our attention to the tale of the

garden of Eden as it is recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Like the Story of Creation, the Story of the Fall of humanity finds its counterpart in other primitive mythologies. The Serpent, for example, is constantly found in the legends of antiquity. In Persia it was the symbol of the god of evil. And our own English story of St. George and the Dragon is but a modern variation of the same tale. The student of comparative mythology finds it a task of much interest to trace back the various legends about the Serpent, along the twofold stream of their development, to a common source in the prehistoric East. But the Hebrew Story of the Fall has a more direct affinity with the ancient myths of Babylonia than with the religion of Zoroaster. Upon the emblematical monuments of Assyria there have been detected several points of resemblance to the picture of the Hebrew Paradise. The trees in the garden of Eden—the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—have an obvious parallel in the coniferous sacred trees, which are found in many Assyrian representations. The Cherubim stationed to guard the approach to the garden are like the colossal griffins, that stand at the entrance to the ruined temples of Babylonia. And a royal seal was unearthed some years ago, bearing a picture of a holy tree, with the figures of a man and a woman on either side, and a serpent poised erect behind the latter. It is from the great library of Assurbanipal, however,

with its cylindrical tablets of clay, that further light has recently been thrown upon the Genesis of the Hebrew legend. The seven tablets which record the Creation are much mutilated, and that fragment which probably contains the account of the origin of humanity has not yet been found.¹ But on the third tablet—which represents the creation of light as the result of the victory of Merodach over the Serpent—there is a passage that evidently bears upon the Story of the Fall. It has been translated as follows :—

“ In sin one with the other in compact joins :
The command was established in the garden of the god.
The fruit they ate, they broke in two ; its stalk they destroyed,
The sweet juice which injures the body.
Great is their sin. Themselves they exalted.
To Merodach their Redeemer he appointed their fate.”

“ It is almost impossible,” to quote the words of the translator, “ not to see in this fragment the pith of the story of the Fall, while the last line at once brings Merodach before us as One Who would defeat the tempter and restore the fallen. . . . The more we examine the position of Merodach in the Chaldæan mythology, the more we see how closely it approaches the Hebrew conception of the Messiah. He was the son of the great earth-mother, Dav-Kina, the wife of Ea, and bore as his own name that of Mar-dugga, ‘the Holy Son.’ He was the Mediator between gods and men, healing sickness, forgiving sin, raising

¹ But *vide* preceding note, p. 25.

the dead, not by his own power, but by that of his father Ea. And now we find him acting as the Redeemer of the fallen pair."

Thus, we can now estimate with considerable probability the Genesis of the Biblical Story of the Fall. Its relation to the Chaldæan myth is less direct than that of the Cosmogony with which our Bible opens. They stand towards one another, not so much as parent and child, but rather as "sons of the same house." For the third chapter of Genesis belongs to one of the pair of "Prophetical" documents, which are of a much earlier date than the sacerdotal writing from which the first chapter is taken. The Story was probably committed to writing, in the early centuries of the Monarchy, by one of the Schools of the Prophets in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. In substance, therefore, it is some hundreds of years older than the great Epic of the Creation. As in the second chapter of Genesis we have a fragment of the primitive Cosmogony of the Hebrews, so, too, here we find a relic of Semitic mythology, which must have been current among the Hebrews long before their exile in Assyria. Though it may have been revised at a later period, it seems to have been included among the contents of their tribal saga from the beginning: while its resemblance to the Babylonian story is probably due to the fact that both were an inheritance of the Hebrews and Babylonians alike from their ancestral home in Mesopotamia. And, again, its inspiration has come to it

from the prophetic atmosphere, which was the distinctive breath of Hebrew religion. The difference between the Biblical legend and its Chaldean relative is obvious to every reader. Its unknown author has converted a pagan myth into an ideal vehicle of truth. A fantastic picture of warring deities has disappeared before the manifestation of the One True God. The origin of evil is no longer ascribed to Deity, or even to man himself, but to the promptings of a spiritual tempter. God's Character is seen to be such that He must abhor the sin to which humanity has yielded. And the hope of ultimate deliverance—which sustained, not only the Hebrews, but many nations of antiquity—is recognised to be based upon the need of our redemption from an evil power. The Biblical writer was "the acute and faithful reader" of his own consciousness. As Professor G. Adam Smith remarks, he was an "expert in the heart's experience of temptation, the mysterious connexion between knowledge and the boldness to sin, the workings of the human conscience, and the relation of guilt, if not to death, at least to its curse and terror. After all the centuries of man's acquaintance with himself, after all the analyses of ethics and psychology, we have hardly reached further than this ancient examination of the mysteries and complexities of the human heart." And yet the Story of the Garden of Eden was practically unnoticed by Jewish thought. There is an eloquence, to quote the words of the late Bishop of Durham, in "the remarkable

silence throughout the Old Testament as to the Fall itself. The Jew did not dwell with regretful retrospect upon a lost Paradise ; his thoughts were turned to a more glorious future." By national character his race was always "the people of the future." Nor can it be "without a profound meaning that the record of the Fall is not noticed once unquestionably in the later books of the Old Testament, and only twice in the Apocrypha, till the fact of the Incarnation had enabled men to understand its import."

So we pass to our main question—What is the Fall? If the Biblical Story does not relate an historical event, has there ever been such a thing as the Fall? And, if so, how can its occurrence be "reconciled" with the scientific doctrine of the continuous evolution of the human race? Such is the problem. Yet the Christian is aware that any apparent antithesis between the teaching of Science and the Bible must be due to misconception. Instead of trying with vain labour to "reconcile" their revelations, he sees that each is teaching him an aspect of the truth. For to those who recognise that the proper function of science is to unfold the Glory of the Divine Immanence in the world of Nature and of Man, all modern knowledge about humanity will be welcome. Of course, the Christian starts with his own belief in the Personality of Jesus Christ. He is "the Foundation That is already laid." And a faith in Him illuminates for us the nature of man as well as God. We believe in Him as the

Redeemer of the human race. His Cross is the very symbol of our faith. And the reason why we believe in the Fall is solely because we believe in the Redemption of humanity. Our faith springs from no legend save that of the Via Dolorosa, and from our own personal experience of its spiritual validity and truth. For the Catholic Church has never defined her faith, with dogmatic detail, in the Fall or the Redemption. She has simply held to the facts, without elaborating an explicit doctrine. In reference to the Atonement, there have been various theories devised from age to age, which perhaps appear to us absurd, disingenuous, or revolting. The Atonement, however, is not a theory, but a fact. And it is the Cross—and not a theory about the Cross—that is the undying Emblem of the Gospel. In like manner, it is only in the fact of the Fall that we who are Christians have always believed ; for it is correlative to the Evangel of the Cross. Starting from our belief in "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," we see that the Fall is real, because the Cross reveals it to us.

A useful key to the problem—as has been indicated by Archdeacon Wilson and other modern theologians—may be found in the analogy of the individual and the race ; for, after all, the story of humanity is repeated in the history of every soul. Consider yourselves as individuals. You cannot point to the moment in time at which you can be said to have come into being. When you were a

child, and learned that God made you, you did not understand the How, and When, and Where. But now you know that once you were a germ-cell, that the process of your creation has been uninterrupted, and that all your varied faculties have arisen within you by gradual development. Your own existence—as you are now aware—is absolutely continuous with that of your parents. At no actual moment in time can you say that God intervened and made you. Nevertheless, the content of your childhood's faith is untouched by your subsequent discoveries about yourself; and you can still believe that God created you. Pass, then, from your own selves to mankind as a whole. Carry your story outward, and you will find it "writ large" in history. What has happened to you as an individual, has happened also to the human race. Science tells us that man is descended from the ancestry of the anthropoid hominidæ. The gulf between the organic and the inorganic has not yet been bridged; but biology has at least made it more than probable that the Tree of life is One, and that all living things are vitally interdependent. Plants, animals, men—all live in virtue of the one Energy of Life: of which the Church believes "the Giver" to be the Holy Ghost. Thus, the life of humanity is continuous with that of the lower creation. At no actual moment in time can we say that God intervened and created "Adam." His Spirit has been at work all through the process. Organic evolution is simply the name by which we

now describe the form and method of His action. The content of the Church's faith is undisturbed—nay, its range of application is immensely widened. For while we used to think that God only interfered with the earth's progress on special occasions, we now see that the Creator's Work has been unceasing from the first. The discoveries of modern science have indeed enriched our faith.

Not only so—not only is God the Creator of the human race, but He also made man “in His own image.” We are what we are, whatever we may have been. Each of us was once a microscopic germ; each of us now is a man. And because we happen to know that once we were specks of protoplasmic matter, we do not therefore find it necessary to deny that now we are men. The stately oak which has weathered the storms of centuries is not a mere acorn: it is really an oak. A knowledge of the initial form of anything is not the same thing as a knowledge of its essential nature. Indeed, in the case of every phenomenon, it is only by an analysis of its latest condition that we can detect the significance of the earlier stages of its growth. *Finis coronat opus*—“the end crowns all.” Such, then, was the Genesis of the human race. While science has told us that man is evolved from the lower creation, we do not therefore infer that he is merely the highest of the brutes. If he be still an animal, he has become an animal that worships God. His religion is the most universal fact about him. And it

is in that which differentiates him from the brutes that we discern the essence of his nature. The original purpose of the Creator was manifested in the final stage of sentient being. Man really is that which he has become. Inherent in him lies a consciousness of God. He alone of all the creation is capable of worship. And if our theology is always anthropomorphic, it is because our human nature is essentially theomorphic. In the language of the Bible, we have been "made in the Image of God." Linked as he is to lower organisms, man himself emerges as the highest product of evolution, and then stands to look back upon the process of his development in the light of the Heaven that spreads above him. As has been finely said, "It is not the Descent, but the Ascent of man that Darwin has unfolded to us."

And herein too—in this familiar analogy—can be seen the simplest illustration of the Genesis of the Fall. Go back again to the experience of the individual soul. It is your knowledge of God that makes you no longer an animal, but a man. Yet the dawn of that consciousness is followed universally by the consciousness of sin. The new-born infant does not sin, because it knows as yet no standard of right and wrong. To the growing child, however, there comes a time when the voice of conscience begins to be heard. A law of duty soon commences to manifest itself, and something whispers, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." Just as we learn to

say "I am," we also come to feel "I ought." As F. D. Maurice used to say, "The 'I' and the 'ought' are twin words." For the roots of human personality lie embedded in the Soil of God, and our knowledge of God is a moral knowledge—the consciousness of One Whose Will is the absolutely Good. So, as the child becomes aware of its own personality, it also becomes aware of a moral law, and of its own failure to respond to the dictate of the ethical imperative. "The knowledge of sin," says the Apostle, "comes by the law." It is not possible, of course, to point to any particular moment at which first we fell. Ever since we have been conscious of a distinction between right and wrong we have been sinning, while the knowledge of our own sin is deepened in proportion to our knowledge of God and of His Will. Yet—we know it well—once we were innocent babes: we are such no longer. And in that fact lies the unchanging evidence of the Fall. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and the Truth is not in us." We ourselves have fallen—each one of us. And, in like manner, man fell in the infancy of the human race.

Of course, sin may be described as "a survival of brute instincts." But it is more than a survival. Sin is properly "our own fault." There are imperfections in human nature, but there is also a moral retrogression. In the truest moments of our experience we know that we might be better than

we are, and that we have failed to make the most of our opportunities. Heredity and environment are something, but not everything. In part it is "our own fault" that we are such as we are. Sin cannot be described as simply a memento of our physical ancestry, of which we have grown to be ashamed. There is doubtless much in us which recalls our kinship with the lower creation. And it is quite certain that "Adam" was not an ideally flawless creature before he fell. Primitive man was altogether an undeveloped being. His innocence was a mere instinct—like that of every child. Yet his "fall" was a step backward in the world's progress. It marked a real retrogression, just at the moment when a new stage in evolution had been reached. By his sin man not only reverted to the brutal type, but lost the unique prerogative that lay before him. He might have consciously striven to obey that law which dominates all creation; for it was his privilege that he was dimly aware of its moral source. But he utilised his knowledge wrongly, and turned it to his own destruction. Thus, if sin be a survival, it is an unnatural survival. It is not a necessary fact. On the contrary, it is the one anomalous element in history, the one violation of the divine order, the one discord in the music of the universe. The progress of humanity has been thwarted and checked and hindered. Sin threw the world backward when something was emerging into a loftier plane than that which is tenanted by organisms

that are merely animal. And human sin is justly gauged by human knowledge. To follow the instincts of the brute creation is not to follow the norm of our own being, but to disobey the dictates of that which makes us men. While we are striving to—

“Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die,”

we feel that in so doing we are but striving to breathe our rightful atmosphere. For the “brutal” element in us is not really ours. Sin is foreign to our nature. It is a Fall.

The doctrine of the Fall is thus part of the Christian doctrine of human nature. It involves a belief in man as more than a mere automaton. And the instinct which has led some Christian people to look askance upon the scientific revelation of man's origin, finds a partial justification in the fact that some scientists have rashly gone on to dogmatise about the moral being of man. They have asserted that man is but the plaything of necessity, that he is swayed absolutely by forces over which he has no control, and that he has within him no inherent power of choosing between right and wrong. Such a dogma is altogether subversive, not only of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but of all religion and of all morality. It is here indeed that the real “conflict” lies between modern science and the faith. And the conflict is, not with science as such, but with

certain theoretic deductions made by a doctrinaire school of scientists; while all the disciples of a faith in God, or in Righteousness, are allies of the faith of Christendom. We who are Christians are bound to asseverate the truth—which is ratified by all experience—that man is a moral agent, and not a mechanical product of evolution. In a word, we must believe in the reality of the human will. We do not require, I think, to take a side in the psychological controversy of the ages about “free-will.” Determinism or Indeterminism may be equally orthodox. For the problem with which they attempt to deal is conceived as purely human. We who are Christians believe that, apart from God, man is unable to be free. The “freedom” of the will in which we believe is more than a capacity to make a choice between two lines of policy: it is the power to adopt the right alternative. In other words, we believe not merely in a formal but in a spiritual freedom. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” And without that Spirit we are in bondage to “the law of sin and death.” But the initiatory desire to be free arises from within the human personality. In order to co-operate with the Divine Grace, man must be a being endowed with a will, an originating force in the moral world, a person truly capable of realizing himself in action.

And a further point remains. We who are Christians believe, not only in the reality of the human will and of sin, but in the fact of moral heredity. The Fall of

humanity is not merely a thing which reappears in every individual soul, but its results also are handed on from father to son. Every child of man is born with a moral taint—to which theologians have given the title of “original sin.” The import of such a fact, however, has often been misapprehended. While we dare not minimise the gravity of the Fall, neither dare we exaggerate its outcome. The theology of the Christian Church does not asseverate that the human race is totally depraved, or even—as has been popularly said—that “men are born bad.” “Original sin” is far from being a fixed quantity, with which each is dowered at birth. Individuals start at different levels, their handicaps vary in amount. Nevertheless, that which Shelley calls—

“The ineradicable taint of sin”

never ceases to pass onward from generation to generation. The radix of human nature has been infected. The proneness to evil which we inherit—“the baseness in our blood”—is a contagion that we hand on to our children. In short, heredity is an ethical fact. For a moral solidarity exists, not only within the members of each generation, but between all the generations of the human race. Yet such truths, if fraught with a solemn warning, are pregnant also with a mighty hope. Because we human beings are all bound together, we are bound together for good as well as for evil. No victory over temptation is without effect upon the future

of mankind. We can help, as well as hinder, the generations that are to come. And the lesson that we learn from Holy Scripture is not simply the duty of sorrow and contrition for the past, but of advance and amendment for the future. If the Jew did not dwell upon "Paradise Lost" with fond regret, the Christian has far less cause to do so. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a book of moral progress, disclosing the advance of humanity to "a Nobler Man." Onward and Upward is its motto. If it opens with a picture of the Garden of Eden, it closes with a vision of the City of God; while the Hebrew Story is indeed a prophecy of the Advent of the Second Adam, even Jesus Christ. The Christian Church has for many a year been gathering in the fruits of our Redemption, and we await in hope the consummation of her final victory. Forward, not backward, our eyes are turned. The Golden Age of Humanity lies in front.

Just a word in conclusion. Doubt is said to be common in our generation. But indifference, I think, is far more common. And a position of earnest doubt is much nobler than a listless and complacent orthodoxy. The real foe of the Gospel, to-day, as in all other ages, is the absence of any wish to learn and master it. For every one has to win truth for himself. If he accepts the Evangel without a thoughtful study of its contents, it becomes merely an assent to a bundle of traditional propositions. The faith of the Catholic Church—though she has

indeed been ever "the pillar and the ground of the Truth"—is a thing which you, as individuals, must make your own. Then, and then only, can her unchanging Gospel become the inspiration of all you do and say.

MIRACLES

I

THEIR AUTHORITY

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."—ST. JOHN xiv. 1.

THE subject of Miracle has been chosen for our consideration, because it is one which frequently presents a difficulty to thoughtful men. As Christians we believe in miracles. Our faith is absolutely bound up with the reality of that which is called the miraculous. Yet it is most needful to consider what is actually involved in our position. Many intellectual difficulties about the Gospel of Jesus Christ spring from a mistaken view of its contents, and misconception is the fruitful parent of indifference. Of course, "the spirit of the age" is often blamed: it is said to be specially incredulous to-day of Revelation. But I strongly demur to such a statement. If we are living in an age emphatically of reason, we are not therefore more distantly removed from an age of faith. In itself Rationalism is in no sense inimical to the Gospel. For there is no antithesis between faith and reason. The function of the one is altogether distinct from the function of the other. Faith

opens the door, and invites reason to step in. Faith gives to the intellect certain data; and then asks reason to set to work to analyse the content of its gift. Faith puts us in possession of "the mysteries of the Kingdom of God:" reason leads us to a fuller knowledge of their meaning. A rational age is not unfitted to believe the Gospel. Nor are we more sceptical than our fathers were—we are simply more critical. The days of aggressive scepticism are coming to an end. The spirit of "rationalism" now survives only as a spirit of intelligent criticism, which modern education has carried far afield. All of us feel that we must be able to "give a reason," to ourselves, and to others also, "for the hope that is in" us. In this series of addresses, therefore, I shall attempt to put before you that Rationale of the miraculous, which—foreshadowed as it was by more than one of the Fathers of the Early Church—may yet be said to be one of the characteristic notes of modern theology.

Now, an obvious question arises at the outset. Is such a thing as a miracle possible at all? Indeed, this is the fundamental difficulty of modern thought. Here lies the real stumbling-block—at the very threshold. I must simply beg you to step over it, or perhaps round it: for I cannot tell you how it is that God works miracles. I want to consider with you first of all, not the abstract possibility of miraculous phenomena, but their historic evidence and authority. I must, therefore, begin by asking you not to prejudge

all that I have to say. And I am aware that, to some of you, my request may seem irrational and absurd. You will repeat to me, perhaps, the remark which Dr. Jowett hazarded in a rash moment—"Men are ceasing to believe in miracles, as they are ceasing to believe in witchcraft." If it be so, we who are Christians must be content, I fear, to remain for a while longer in the minority. It may be, however, that the word "miracle" conveys to you an idea which it is no longer capable of bearing. I am justified at least in asking you to lay aside an *à priori* dogma of modern science. And so, without at present attempting to remove your stumbling-block, I proceed to consider the authority to which we who are Christians appeal as the historic justification of our belief in miracles.

For many things have been described as miraculous. You have heard, for example, of the miracles at Lourdes. Some of you, perhaps, have read the late M. Zola's novel. Lourdes is a town in the south-west of France, to which an annual pilgrimage is made by thousands of Christians. Within the grotto is a stream of pure water, through the agency of which many persons are said to have been cured of various physical infirmities. The reality of the facts has been attested by many eminent physicians, while all the arrangements for the pilgrimage are in the hands of officials of the Christian Church. And those of you who are at all conversant with the history of the Middle Ages, are well aware that

many similar miracles are said to have been wrought of olden time in this country and elsewhere. The pages of our ecclesiastical chronicles are full of such occurrences, in which results that are called miraculous are attributed to the relics of saints and other objects. Over a large part of the European Continent to-day many sacred things are held to possess a special power of blessing. Even in England we have still a Holy-Well in the north of Wales, and other spots of legendary virtue. Is it, then, such miracles as these that we are going to discuss?

Pass from the ancient chroniclers of the Church to the pages of Holy Scripture, and again you meet with a number of events that are described as miraculous. Is it with these as such that we are concerned? Some of the Biblical miracles bear a distinct resemblance to those of the ecclesiastical writers. And many of those which the Old Testament at least records, are of such a character as to put an intolerable strain upon our common sense. The story of Balaam and the ass, for example, or of Jonah and the whale, or of the standstill of the sun and moon at the word of Joshua—such facts are in flagrant contradiction to our sense of historic possibility. The preface to the Book of Genesis, with its account of the six days of Creation, of the Garden of Eden, and of the Deluge, is now known to be but the Hebrew version of a Semitic mythology. Many of the miraculous incidents recorded in the “heroic age” of the Hebrews find their counterpart in the legends of other ancient

nations. A number of those which are described as miracles can now be seen to be natural phenomena, which have been interpreted from the theological standpoint of the age to which the narrator belonged. The picture of the plagues of Egypt—to take a famous instance—is a graphic account of a succession of ordinary events, which may be witnessed to-day, almost *seriatim*, by the traveller upon the Nile. The crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites was made possible by the action of tide and tempest, the force of a modern storm having been known to drive the shallow waters of Lake Menzaleh down into the Gulf of Aden. In fact, much of the miraculous element in the Bible, as such, has to many of us become incredible.

Thus the question as to the range and scope of Christian belief in the reality of miracles is one of primary importance. In the past, speaking broadly, two replies have been given. Two attitudes have been taken up, each of which is still held to be adequate in different portions of the world of Christian thought. In popular language they may be described as the “Romanist” and the “Protestant” respectively. Such terms are of course somewhat vague, especially the latter. Yet it is not illegitimate to take the second as designating those conceptions of religion which are in sympathy, not with the Christian Church as a fact of history, but rather with the interpretations of her Gospel propounded by the German and Swiss reformers of the sixteenth century. And to claim

the title of "Catholic" for the religion of the English Church, is to claim no more than is warranted by the phraseology of our Book of Common Prayer. For want of better, therefore, I use the terms "Romanist" and "Protestant," and I use them in a historical sense. Touching briefly upon both positions, I shall proceed to indicate a third, which is in fundamental harmony with the historic character of the English Church. It is sometimes as necessary to see what the Gospel is not, as to try and grasp something of what it is. If

"He is the true Conservative
Who lops the withered branch away,"

the most jealous custodian of the Church's faith will be the most anxious to liberate her Evangel from the dry-rot of decay. Iconoclasm is not always out of place. For the idols of popular superstition cannot stand side by side with "the Image of the Invisible God."

First, then, comes the position of the Romanists, who invoke the authority of the Papal Church. The voice of the Pope is to them sufficient evidence, and to believe in miracles is to credit the occurrence of those things that are attested by ecclesiastical authority. The miracles at Lourdes are thus set upon the same plane of credibility as the miracles of Jesus Christ Himself. A faith in the latter is held to involve a faith in all the fantastic legends of the Middle Ages, and all the egregious impostures of

modern Papalism. Such an attitude is peculiarly unsatisfactory. And to most of you the mere description will carry its own condemnation. Yet the acute intellect of Cardinal Newman managed to become persuaded of its validity, and there are millions of our fellow-Christians who have made it their own. Even in England there are those who seem to think that Romanism is the only form in which the principle of authority in religion can be found. Popular novels assume that there is no logical attitude—no ground upon which a rational man can take his stand—between the Papists and the Unitarians. In the case of Continentals, such a view is more than explicable. But our English genius of compromise might have been able to save us from the horns of so unreal a dilemma. The Romanist dogma of infallibility, at least, is incomprehensible to most of us who are Englishmen. While we are anxious to “hold fast that which is good,” we will not surrender our right to “prove all things” to our own personal satisfaction. We refuse to adopt the policy of a cowardly despair, and to identify faith with blind credulity. We cannot believe in the reality of all those ecclesiastical miracles, grotesque and childish, to which Romanism would bind our common sense. For we do not believe in an infallible Pope. To us the evidence of miracle does not lie with him.

Then, secondly, there is the Protestant position—which more closely concerns an Englishman. In

place of the authority of the Roman Church, Protestantism brings forward the authority of Holy Writ. The witness of the Bible becomes adequate in itself to prove the actuality of miracles. Thus, again, the story of the Garden of Eden, or of the watery walls that flanked Israelites in the Red Sea, are placed alongside of the miracles of the New Testament. Faith is considered to imply a belief in the historic character of the legends recorded in the Book of Genesis, and in all the strange occurrences which are related in the Hexateuch and in other portions of the ancient Hebrew writings. This position is not less unsatisfactory than the former. And if it be repudiated in reference to a specific detail, the door is immediately opened to an unending series of attacks. "The Bible and the Bible only," is one of those fundamental principles upon which Protestantism took its stand at birth. If it surrender an outpost, it can give no guarantee to the Christian that it can hold the citadel. Those of its disciples who admit that it is not needful to believe in the historical accuracy of (let us say) the story of Jonah and the whale, are finding it impossible to prevent men from asking—why, then, are we to still believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? Here, indeed, is a dilemma which is not unreal to modern Protestantism, in England as well as on the Continent. M. de Pressensé, a distinguished representative of Continental Protestantism, can see no refuge except the haven of Rome. The Protestant world seems to

be on the eve of the most important crisis it has ever had to face. If "hitherto the simplest person might take his Bible and turn its pages, and every word spake as the voice of God," the progress of modern criticism has produced in some quarters a panic, and in others a revolt. The situation indeed has already become acute, and the "Downgrade," which was prophesied by the late Mr. Spurgeon, has much more than begun. For the historical and scientific method of our day has undermined that theory of verbal inspiration, which Protestantism was the first to formulate, and which it made one of the central pillars of its Gospel. And, with the transience of its basal hypothesis, its character is undergoing an inevitable change. Consciously, and unconsciously, it is becoming Unitarian and Agnostic. Yet we cannot turn back the clock of history. If the authority of an infallible Church has long been discredited in England, so too nowadays is the impeccability and plenary inspiration of the Bible. We can no longer regard the documents of Holy Writ as a collection of infallible sentences.

To what, then, are we to turn? If the miracles of the Church upon the one hand, and of the Bible upon the other, cannot *as such* demand our credence, to what authority do we appeal? Our answer is—the authority of Jesus Christ Himself. For He is the greatest of all miracles. Our Gospel is not bound up with a belief in an infallible man or an infallible book: but it is bound up altogether with a faith in

Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God. We who are Christians "believe in God"; we "believe also" in the Divine Personality of His Son. There, in the narrative of the four Evangelists, we discern a Figure that is indeed intensely Human, yet before Whom we feel that we must bow the knee in worship. He is therefore the ultimate Authority on Which we have built our faith. For He speaks to us "with authority," and our conscience has already responded to His appeal. Our belief in Him springs from the verdict of our spiritual nature as a whole. The witness of literature and tradition, however convincing it may be, is not the only kind of proof which we possess. The Word of God is found outside the pages of the Bible, and we have an attestation to Jesus Christ within ourselves. Our own personal experience, together with that of all the saints and sages of the Christian Church, ratifies the outward testimony of the Christian documents. For no logical method by itself can result in producing faith. Any attempt made to force men to believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, by elaborating a scientific proof of His Resurrection, is foredoomed to impotence and failure. At best, it could only bring us into the condition of those of whom an Apostle says that they "believe and tremble"; while it is altogether abhorrent to the genius of the Gospel. "An otiose assent" to any number of miraculous statements is quite worthless in itself. Faith is not to be created by any form of external compulsion whatsoever. We

may have to yield, in Dr. Westcott's words, to "what we admit to be an inevitable intellectual conclusion. But the state of mind which is thus produced is often simply a state of exhaustion, and not of quickening. Till the heart welcomes truth, it remains outside us." Religion must start with an act of faith. While we welcome all rational inquiry into the credentials of the Gospel, our conscience has already borne witness of its spiritual truth. We "know that our Redeemer liveth": for the Father has sent within our hearts the Spirit of His Incarnate Son.

Thus, it is with the miracles of the New Testament that we who are Christians are concerned. We feel them to be *prima facie* of a distinctive character, in that they form part of the scenery of the historic Advent of our Redeemer. Of course, criticism has been at work upon the New Testament. But, in the case of the Christian documents, its result has been very different from that which has befallen the contents of the Jewish Bible. The traditional estimate has largely been substantiated.¹ The New Testament has emerged from the ordeal of the Higher Criticism, not indeed unscathed, yet with little more than the smell of the fire upon it. It is seen to be what it professes to be—not a volume dropped from the clouds, but an authentic narrative of our Redemption, accompanied by an Apostolic commentary. By what process exactly it came to assume its present shape and form is doubtless an interesting problem.

¹ *Vide* Appendix III., p. 274.

And it demands the careful study of the Christian reader. But it does not affect his profound conviction that, in the New Testament, he has before him a record of genuine history, together with its original interpretation. The Higher Criticism of the Bible is no enemy of religion, but its truest friend. It is making the mode of Revelation more comprehensible to us. And we are continuing to believe in the Gospel "not in spite of criticism, nor under protest against it, but by reason of it and its verdict." If it has shown that a certain theory of inspiration is no longer tenable, such a fact has itself opened up the New Testament to intelligent study and belief. It has melted the ice in which the literary record of God's Revelation has long been packed and bound, and disclosed a luxuriant pasturage for the Christian intellect. Indeed, the Higher Criticism has made it more easy for the thoughtful reader to believe in the fact of Biblical Inspiration, alike in the Old Testament and in the New.

Here, then, is the attitude which may be said to be characteristic of the English Church. And its logical validity lies in the fact that it includes all that may be of value in the positions which I have broadly described as "Romanist" and "Protestant." For there is an authority belonging both to Church and to Bible, and they unite in the authority of Jesus Christ. After all, the Romanists are right in their assertion that the Church is the exponent and interpreter of Holy Writ. She is of greater age than

the New Testament. The men who composed the Christian Scriptures were her members, prelates and laymen, holding a common faith in Jesus Christ; while their various writings were intended for the edification of those who were Churchmen like themselves. No one can read the New Testament without discovering that its authors never imagined that they were producing an exhaustive manual of religion. Not only did our Lord commit nothing Himself to writing, but He gave no orders to His Apostles to compose a Bible: for He knew that the living voice would always be a more effective teacher than the printed page. Paul, the Apostle, did not dream that his correspondence with his local churches was the commencement of a new Canon of Holy Writ. The compilation of the Christian documents was an afterthought of the Christian Church. Nevertheless, it was the Church that wrote the New Testament, and she wrote it for her own use. If it has been in modern times a prolific parent of confusion, it is only because the historical perspective of the situation has been distorted, and men have failed to see that the Christian Bible is the literary product of an organised Society, to whose keeping the Apostolic Gospel was entrusted from the first. Surely, the Church that compiled the Book has a right to tell the world what it is intended to describe and explain.

Yet the authority of the Christian Church requires to be balanced by that of the Christian Bible. Our

English Reformers were right in their assertion that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation." Although as a matter of historical fact the Church preceded the New Testament, its composition has turned out to be the most important event in all her history. With the decease of the Apostles the content of their Gospel would soon have lost its symmetry, if there had been no Scriptures to which Christians could appeal. As the Church began to meet the waves of heathen speculation, she was forced to define and justify herself in the language of the philosophic schools. That which she had held implicitly from the first had now to be stated in such a way as to meet the exigencies of the occasion. And she turned to the New Testament for support. When speculation came forward to say that Jesus must be either not truly Divine or not truly Human, the Church simply denied the validity of pure logic, and resolved not to lose her hold upon either aspect of her Gospel. When, placing the Divinity of Christ in His Person rather than in His Nature, she was accused of worshipping more gods than One, she again could but asseverate that the charge was false. For in drawing up her creed, she was simply making more explicit her belief in that Christian Name of God, into which every convert had been ushered at his Baptism, and which had been the common faith of all the authors of the New Testament. The fact that, at Nicaea, a copy of the Holy Gospels was placed in the centre of the council, was typical of her universal

custom. "Do not believe what I tell you," says a bishop of the third century to his catechumens, "unless you can find it in the Sacred Writings." The limits of the Canon of Holy Writ were already practically settled. It was not by the formal decree of any Council, but rather by the general usage of the Church at large, that the New Testament obtained its general authorization. For it was through the practical experience of her members that the Church learnt the value of her canonical writings, and also learnt to find in them the test of all her doctrines. She was guided by a spiritual instinct, which reveals to the Christian the Hand of God. And the Reformation did but reassert her ancient practice. Surely, "the Church to teach and the Bible to prove," is a valid principle of interpretation. It is the historical correlation of authority.

II

THEIR CREDIBILITY

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"—ACTS xxvi. 8.

IT has been said that modern Biblical criticism is a science which has "proved fatal to orthodoxy." And if by "orthodoxy" is meant some theory of Scriptural interpretation, which has become a popular "tradition of the elders," a similar comment might be made of every scientific discovery from Copernicus and Galileo to Charles Darwin, and of every theological movement from Origen to Luther and from John Knox to Dr. Pusey. But orthodoxy, in its essence, is historical. It is a belief in those facts of history of which the Catholic Church is at once the product and the witness: while the New Testament is the literary record, fragmentary and yet adequate, of their occurrence and of their Divine signification. The Birth and Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord—these are the transcendental mysteries of the Gospel, which underlie the very existence of the Church, and interpret the history both of the

ancient and the modern world. And, as we have already seen, it is upon the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ that we who are Christians have taken up our stand. Our Bible presents to us a Figure Which our Church says is that of God's Incarnate Son. We believe in Him as "the Foundation" which is already laid. And therefore we believe in the reality of miracle. But before we pass on to consider the significance of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, I wish to return to the threshold of our subject, and to ask whether there is any rational possibility of miracles at all. Is a miracle a thing which is essentially incredible in itself? It may be thought, perhaps, that such a question should have been set in the forefront of our inquiry. A discussion of the abstract possibility of miraculous phenomena ought to precede, rather than follow, a discussion of the authority to which Christians appeal. Yet I think that we may be the gainers by our logical delay. Now that the ground has been cleared, we can approach the subject from a more advantageous standpoint. For in trying to put before you the reason of our belief in the credibility of miracle, you will see that I am not trying to help you to believe in the historic truth of such a story as that of Jonah and the whale, but in the fact of the Advent of Him "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven."

It is from the realm of physical science that the real difficulty has come. Many of those who have

been affected by the influence of scientific modes of thought feel that the miraculous is an insuperable stumbling-block. They not only say, with Matthew Arnold, that "miracles do not happen," but they go on to say that they can never have happened: for this universe is governed, as we are now aware, by a system of natural law, a violation of which is simply impossible. Now, this idea of the Universal Reign of Law is one of the noblest which modern science has given us. And only those who have some acquaintance with scientific knowledge can appreciate its majestic proportions. But we must consider what is meant by scientific law. A natural law—such as the law of gravitation—is a uniformity which men have detected in nature's system. It is a generalization from scientific experience. That material things attract one another with a force proportional to the mass of each, and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them, is a convenient formula under which we can range a series of empiric phenomena. Nevertheless, the law of gravitation cannot be said to explain the ultimate cause of gravity. The fact is one thing: its interpretation is quite another. Reduce the system of physical nature to a series of scientific formulæ, and we have not yet laid hold of its essential cause; for no aggregate of natural uniformities can be the same thing as the ultimate Unity of Nature. The laws discovered by us in Nature do not of necessity bind the Will of Him Who is Nature's God. Ultimately, the idea of

causation is a thing which has been derived from the human will. And thus men have been led, unconsciously, to personify the forces of Nature, and call them "laws," as if they were in themselves independent activities. But, in truth, they are at every moment dependent upon the Will of God. A law of Nature is simply a regularity discovered by human beings in the methods of God's operation—it is not something which prevents Him from acting otherwise. The man who denies the possibility of a miracle, is a man who has exalted a system of inexorable law to a throne above that of God Himself. To such a man law is no longer a mode of the Divine Energy, but a part of the Divine Being. Law itself is God. Fate, or Necessity, is the Monarch of the universe. There is no God at all.

Such a conclusion is, of course, intolerable. Materialistic atheism numbers very few disciples nowadays, if indeed there are any left at all. There is another form of atheism, however, which is far more subtle, and wears so specious a face that it has deceived its votaries into thinking it to be a genuine religion. In place of saying that there is no God, it declares that God is Everything. The system of Nature itself is God. It is not unnatural that the students of physical Nature should be fascinated by such a worship. Pantheism may be said to be the typical religion of modern science; while it exerts a considerable influence even upon those who stand outside the circle of professional scientists. Yet it is not

really more thinkable than materialism. The truth upon which it has fastened, and which gives to it whatsoever charm and validity it may possess, is the truth of God's Immanence in the material universe. The God of Nature is not only "the First Cause" of the universe, but He is also the Omnipresent in Nature. He it is Who sustains and directs the universe, the Source of its energy, the Principle of its order, the Ground of its existence. But if we go on to identify Him with the totality of Nature, we have annihilated Him as an Object of human worship. We have deified a system. We have started with the universe and tried to find God in it, instead of starting with God and trying to find the universe in Him. And, therefore, we have lost Him altogether. There is a sense, of course, in which it is true to say that God is everything. The universe, as being the content and expression of His Thought, may be said to be contained in Him. Yet the converse of such a proposition cannot stand. For, if everything is God, there is nothing which is not God: and worship has become impossible, because there is really no God at all. Pantheism, in essence, is but idealistic atheism. Nevertheless, we who are Christians will never rob it of its glamour for the scientific mind, until we make the truth upon which it is based our own. That aspect of belief in Jesus Christ which sees in Him the Word Immanent in Nature, is only beginning to assume its rightful place in our theology. While it has never been lost to view among the Eastern

Churches, it has long dropped out of sight in Western Christendom. And it is to the influence of modern science, more than to anything else, that its gradual recovery is due. We are turning with a fresh interest to those passages in the New Testament which speak of the relation between our Lord and the material universe. In this phase of His Personality, we are finding a rich vein of truth, which has still to be quarried by the Christian Church. We read that "all things were created by Him and for Him : and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." And science illuminates the Apostolic doctrine. In proportion as the fact of God's Immanence in Nature receives its proper emphasis in our religion, Pantheism will gradually disappear.

But we have still to analyse the secret of the scientific difficulty about miracles. It springs from the object-matter with which science deals, and the "psychological atmosphere" which surrounds the typical scientist. He is always immersed in the material of Nature ; and the more exclusively he is devoted to his special branch of study, the more apt he is to become unable to appreciate the validity of other channels of knowledge than that of physical sensation. Darwin, in a famous letter, confessed that as a result of his scientific devotion his mind had become "a machine for grinding out general laws," and that he had lost the capacity of finding enjoyment in art and literature. From want of exercise, the spiritual faculty of his nature had grown torpid,

and he found himself dead to music and poetry as well as to religion. Nor is this an uncommon experience among the votaries of physical science; while it is obvious that, if human nature is to reach its proper stature, the human spirit requires to be trained and cultivated as well as the human intellect. Here we reach the heart of the problem. For it is only when we start from the moral universe, and not solely from the universe of matter, that we are able to find God at all. The Ethical Character of God is the supreme truth about Him. Goodness, which is the primary essence of His Nature, is just that which is wholly obliterated by Pantheism. In the present world there is evil as well as good; and if God be Everything, He is no longer a Moral Being, but a non-moral Force, or Cause, or Reason. And such a conclusion does violence to our moral sense. The truth of God's Goodness is that which alone can justify all our moral aspirations. We must rely upon the dictate of the human conscience, and feel it to be as valid a channel of knowledge as the human intellect. The ethical instinct, the spiritual intuition of right and wrong, is indeed the fundamental basis of religion.

Thus, you will realise that the standpoint of the conventional scientist is apt to be partial and incomplete. The primary interest of scientific Theism is God's Immanence in the material universe; whereas we have to consider the relation of God, not only to physical Nature, but to human nature as a whole. In short, we have to ponder his attitude towards the

human race. And it is here that the Christian finds a rational ground for his belief in the possibility of a miracle. The Revelation of the Bible is, in a phrase, a revelation of the Goodness of God. The Old Testament is a manifestation of His Righteousness, while the New is a disclosure of His Love. And if the Moral Character of God is the supreme truth about Him, He must be supremely interested in the moral character of human beings. He must be specially concerned with the ethical order of the universe, and primarily desirous of the spiritual advancement of the human race. In a word, He must be anxious that we should be sharers in His Goodness. Hence, it is surely not inconceivable that He should be willing to sacrifice the physical order of the universe *on behalf of the moral*. And this is precisely what we who are Christians believe to have taken place in the "Miracle" of the Advent of Jesus Christ. Nor is it just to speak of such a fact as a violation of law. On the contrary, it is the crowning vindication of God's Character as a Moral Being. As Archbishop Temple finely said, "Behind all the uniformities of the world lies the Supreme Uniformity—the Eternal Law of Right and Wrong—and all other laws of whatsoever kind must be ultimately harmonized by it alone." Nor can we discover any valid basis for our conviction of the absolute supremacy of the moral law, save in the Personality of Jesus Christ. Unless He is what His Church has always believed Him to be, it is not possible to find

any substantial ground for believing God to be the Righteous Governor of the Universe. Vestiges of Omnipotence lie around us on every side in the mechanism of Nature's system, and are being disclosed to us with an ever-increasing fulness by modern science. But the indications of God's Goodness have to be first discovered by an analysis of human nature, and require for their justification some unique spectacle in human history. And in the Advent of Jesus Christ we find just that transcendent Act of the Divine Graciousness, by which the world has been able, in the face of Nature's revelation, to believe in the Righteousness, and Love, and Holiness, as well as in the Wisdom and the Power of God.

It will be obvious, therefore, that the New Testament must be approached from a moral standpoint. To the man who really believes in God as a Moral Being, there is no longer any question as to the *a priori* possibility of the miraculous. A Theist does not ask, can miracles happen? He asks whether, as a matter of historical fact, they ever have happened. To quote the words of Dr. Carpenter, "The scientific Theist finds no abstract difficulty in the conception that the Author of Nature can, if He will, occasionally depart from" its settled and common order. "I am not conscious," he adds, "of any such scientific prepossession against miracles as would prevent one from accepting them as facts, if trustworthy evidence of their reality could be adduced. The question with

me, therefore, is simply this—have we any adequate historical ground for the belief that such departure has ever taken place? Yet the question is not quite so simple as Dr. Carpenter appears to think. It is impossible to estimate the historical value of the New Testament by such methods of investigation, and by them alone, as are applied to the narratives (let us say) of Herodotus or Livy or the Venerable Bede. The story of the Evangelists is the record of a fact which, if true, must be altogether unique in history. We have no data with which to compare it. We can believe in it and receive it. But we cannot sit in judgment upon it. It must be its own justification. And the “adequacy” of the historical evidence for such a Miracle cannot be weighed aright by merely using the canons of literary criticism. “Historical method,” as Mr. Balfour says, “has its limitations. It is self-sufficient only within an area which is indeed extensive, but which does not embrace the universe. For our judgment as to the truth or falsity of any particular historical statement depends, partly on our estimate of the writer’s trustworthiness, and partly on our estimate of his means of information; but partly also on our estimate of the intrinsic credibility of the facts to which he testifies. . . . It is manifest that, in many cases, our opinion as to the competence and veracity of witnesses is modified by our opinion as to the inherent likelihood of what they tell us: while our opinion as to the essential probability of their story depends on considerations with

respect to which no historical method is able to give us any conclusive help."

Here is the ground of our quarrel with a certain school of modern critics. While we are anxious to "treat the New Testament like any other book," we claim the right to use the moral consciousness, no less than the ecclesiastical tradition, as constituting an integral part of the historic sense in criticism. There may be details of miraculous narrative which we find it difficult to regard as literally true. Yet they are few in number, and do not touch the essential story of the Gospel. It is absurd to say, with Professor Goldwin Smith, that "we cannot pick and choose." Analysis is the proper prelude to all study. To cut the string will always be easy, whether on the one side or the other: but it is not heroic, and certainly not critical. The documents of the New Testament which describe the occurrence of miracle require the keen scrutiny of every student. But they also demand the moral sympathy of every critic. To ask us to approach them without a belief in the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ, is as illegitimate as to ask us to approach the Old Testament without a belief in God's Personality. Each is the necessary presupposition of either literature. And to reject either the one or the other is not to be free from bias, but to be enslaved by an unconscious prejudice. It is not necessary to cease to be a Christian, before one can appreciate the historical testimony of the New Testament. On the contrary, it is only when we

start within the Christian Church that we can form a just estimate of its witness. For the record of the Advent of Jesus Christ cannot be truly appraised, until we have utilised the spiritual as well as the critical faculty, and brought philosophy to our aid as well as science, and religion as well as history.

But the scientific difficulty still remains—urgent, impressive, overwhelming. “Are you not building,” men say, “your temple of religion on credulity? Have you not wished to believe, and so fashioned a basis for your Gospel out of your own spiritual aspirations? Science and religion must go their own ways: you can give us no justification for the reality of such a Miracle as you describe.” We cannot, it is true, justify miracle at the bar of physical science; but we can, I think, indicate the ground of its “scientific” credibility. If the scientist be a Theist also, he is bound to believe, not only in the moral possibility, but in the physical actuality of a miracle. He finds a world around him, which he calls the world of Nature, and in which this planet is as a drop of water in the ocean. How did this universe first come into being at all? The miracle of the Creation looms up into view. And the first sentence of the Bible states a truth, without which the world of Nature remains unintelligible. The ultimate beginning of the universe is a miracle, the reality of which it is impossible for any rational Theism to deny. For the eternity of matter, outside the Thought of God, is a greater stumbling-block to the human

spirit than the fact of its creation in time and space. If matter has not been created, God is merged in a universe which can no longer be described as His. Pantheism destroys, not only the Moral Character, but the Spirituality of God, because it abolishes His Personality as a Spiritual Being. How the content of God's Thought found expression for itself in the creation of the world of Nature is one of the ultimate mysteries of the universe. Yet it is an indubitable fact. And, therefore, if we are to believe in a God Who "is a Spirit," the miracle of the creation emerges with a challenge to the scientific intellect.

Turn, then, to the Personality of Jesus Christ, and you will find in Him the fulfilment of scientific Theism. We who are Christians believe not only in the miracle of the Creation, but in that of the Re-Creation of the human race. The second throws its light backward upon the first; while the pair hold within themselves the secret of our Evangel. The miraculous element in the Gospel is summed up in the miracle of the Person of our Lord. He "through Whom" in the beginning "all things were made," is He Who "for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven." God's Instrument in the Creation of the universe was also His Instrument in the Re-Creation of the world of human nature. The second fact, occurring as it did in history, discloses to us that for which our reason craves. For Jesus Christ, the Son of Man and Son of God, is the Miracle of time and space. Through faith in Him we can

gain "the fellowship of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." And we can catch a glimpse of the purpose of the Eternal, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together all things in Christ." Indeed,

"The acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth—and out of it."

III

THEIR INTERPRETATION

"Every one that doeth sin, doeth also lawlessness : and sin is lawlessness."—I ST. JOHN iii. 4.

IT is a truism to say that Revelation is a progressive fact. The content of the Gospel, unchanged as it has been from the beginning, is being realised only by slow degrees ; so that the interpretation of "the Truth as it is in Jesus" must vary from age to age. And, to us, the appeal of His miracles is chiefly ethical. We who are Christians assume the truth of His Divine Personality, and the substantial accuracy of the extant documents. Of course, as I have already remarked, there may be sundry details of narrative which are not reports of authentic history. The story of the cursing of the barren fig-tree, for example, may have been originally one of our Lord's parables, which has been translated by the Evangelist into concrete fact. The destruction of the swine at Gadara is also a dubious incident, together with the prophecy that a coin would be found in the fish's mouth. If the credibility of a miracle depends upon its moral character, the record of one which is outwardly a

non-moral fact may justly incur our suspicion. Such exceptions, however, do not affect the general substance of the evangelical narrative. Nor do they really militate against its historical veracity as a whole. All the way through the New Testament our moral sense provides us with a canon of spiritual criticism upon its documents. It is the evidence of our conscience, and not only that of an external literature, which has enabled us to believe in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Faith indeed is its own criterion. The spiritual instinct alone is that which can ultimately attest the truth of the Gospel. And I desire to call your attention to the rationality of its witness to the miraculous.

The term "miracle" is, as you are aware, a Latin word denoting a "wonder," a "portent," a "marvel." The two Greek terms, however, that are usually employed by the Evangelists are more accurately translated "signs" and "works." And the new rendering, which is found in the Revised Version, is far more expressive than the old. For the miracles recorded by the Evangelists are not a series of unnatural prodigies, exhibited in order to startle and appal men, and so to force them to acknowledge the Divinity of God's Messiah. They are not *miracula*—they are "signs" and "works," Signs of the sort of Person Whom He is, and Works of such a character as He would naturally perform. Our Lord never wrought a miracle in order to puzzle or confound His enemies, or to gain credence

for His doctrine. The disciples of a great Prophet, aiming at the conversion of the world, would have represented their Master as working to attract the blind devotion of the multitude, and as trying to paralyse all opposition by rousing a wave of triumphant enthusiasm. Such was indeed to be the policy of the Messiah whom the Jews were expecting. But it was never that of Jesus Christ. When such an idea presented itself to Him; He put it from Him as an unworthy suggestion. He refused to fling Himself down from a pinnacle of the Temple into the surging populace below, and so be hailed by them as the Donor of a "Sign from Heaven." To regard the miracles of Jesus Christ merely as stupendous exhibitions of power is to miss their secret, and at the same time to provide a fair target for the guns of the critical Agnostic. Matthew Arnold sneered at such apology. To quote his famous instance—"Suppose I could change the pen with which I write this into a pen-wiper, I should not thus make what I write any the truer or more convincing." But the criticism will be seen to be as irrelevant, as it is assuredly irreverent, by all who are willing to allow Jesus Christ to be His own Interpreter. The genuine student tries to apprehend the standpoint from which He desired His miracles to be understood. For he sees that our Lord never exerted His miraculous energy save in answer to a nascent faith. He "could do no mighty works in" His own country because of the

unbelief of those who professed to know Him well. Before He could do good to any one, He required the assurance of at least a rudimentary confidence in Him. None of His miraculous deeds were done in order to extort a confession of faith, but only in response to one that had in some way been already confessed.

Of course such a plan of work could not fail to be misunderstood—by the Jews, as well as by Matthew Arnold. More than once our Lord was impudently challenged to produce a sign. Pharisee and Sadducee alike demanded of Him some credential, the authority of which it would be impossible to gainsay. And even Herod was glad to meet the great Prophet, “because he hoped to see a miracle.” But the patronising curiosity of the politician fared no better than the supercilious scorn of the leaders of the Church. Our Lord would only satisfy the aspirations of those who were honestly desirous to know the truth. To seek after a Sign was, He said, the mark of “an evil and adulterous generation”—a generation guilty of the sin of unfaithfulness to that covenanted union which God had established between Himself and His people—and no sign would be given to any such generation, except that of Himself. Just as our Lord always spoke to the crowds in parables, not in order to mystify them, but in order to test the reality of their wish to understand Him, and then explained His teaching privately to the select few whose faith in Him was growing day by

day, so too He would never work a miracle in order to force Himself upon a world unwilling to receive Him. For a long time even His disciples could not fathom the secret of His plan. The two "sons of thunder" were quite ready at first to call down fire from Heaven upon a village that had given a somewhat unfriendly reception to their Master. And they required to learn, by a rebuke, that such was not to be the "spirit" of His miracles. Nor had the lesson been mastered by His brethren, at a later time in His public Ministry, when they remonstrated with Him for clinging to such a stupid policy. He ought to go up to Jerusalem, they said, and let His mighty actions be seen by the citizens of the metropolis—"If Thou doest these things, manifest Thyself unto the world"! For, as the author of the Fourth Gospel could well perceive at last, when more than fifty years later he was writing down his reminiscence of the event, "neither did His brethren believe on Him."

Yes, this characteristic feature is everywhere to be seen. Not only did our Lord never obtrude His miracles before the public eye, but He tried at first to prevent the report of their occurrence from spreading among the people. "See thou tell no man," was an injunction which He gave to more than one sufferer whom He had cured. As He came down from the Mount of the Transfiguration, He repeated the command to the Apostles, "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen from the dead."

For the miracle had taken place, not in order to create a belief in His Messianic Personality, but to deepen and strengthen a faith that was already there: the sight of Moses and Elijah conversing with their Master was a confirmation of the truth, just confessed by the Apostle Peter, that indeed He was the One Who had come to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. And, in the miracle of the Resurrection, the same policy was still pursued. It was only to those who believed in Him that He showed Himself risen from the grave. Not to Pilate or Herod or Caiaphas did He appear, startling the world with an actual demonstration that it was He. And whenever there was a possibility that He might be seen by others than His disciples, He was careful to assume at least a partial disguise—as a Gardener at the mouth of the tomb, and as a Stranger on the road to Emmaus and on the shore of the Lake of Galilee.

But, of course, the actual result was very different from that which our Lord desired. Men are always more ready to gape with astonishment at something which perplexes the outward eye, than to lay their hearts and minds open to receive a progressive revelation of the truth. As a matter of historical fact, our Lord's miracles did produce an extraordinary effect. The fame of His mighty works stirred the very heart of the Jewish nation, and convinced the majority of the populace that the Messiah was at last amongst them. "When the Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than this man doeth?"—was the

common gossip of the crowd. Even the cultured ecclesiastic was compelled to avow, "No man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And the enthusiasm of "the people who saw the Signs that He did" was at one time kindled to such a pitch of excited loyalty, that He had to retire into the desert in order to escape the ordeal of a coronation by popular acclaim. Our Lord could not but feel the danger of the situation. Men were flocking to see and hear Him, and they came because of the notoriety of His miraculous works. He must attempt to lead them onward to a higher faith. However much He might be disinclined to emphasise His miracles, He could no longer disparage so potent a factor in His growing popularity. He must teach men to regard His actions from a loftier standpoint. If their effect was to bear fruit in the spectators, He must try to enlarge the crude sort of faith which as yet they had produced. So, when the Pharisees asked Him the reason why the man was blind from his birth, He shocked all their theories about the ways of Providence by replying that the purpose of the man's affliction was "that the Works of God might be manifested in him." His own act, in restoring the man's sight, was to be an unfolding of God's Activity. For the sake of His disciples He was glad that He was not present at the death-bed of Lazarus: and while He bade them roll away the stone from the dead man's grave, He calmed the sister's evident reluctance with the words—"Said I

not that, if thou believest, thou shouldest see the Glory of God." To the eye of faith, the restoration of the dead to life would assuredly reveal a Majesty Which was Divine. Then, if the Jews sought to kill Him because He was making Himself to be equal with God, He was ready to explain the secret of His miraculous operations—"the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doeth, these the Son doeth in like manner." His own actions showed the Source whence He had come—"the Works that the Father hath given Me to finish, the same Works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." Such Works were indeed the condemnation of those who saw them and did not believe. The cities of the Gentiles which He had not visited would find the judgment "more tolerable" than the towns and villages of the favoured race. And when our Lord was accused at last of blasphemy, He did not hesitate even to draw men's attention to His miracles, and to appeal to the moral character which they disclosed as a valid testimony to Himself. "If I do not the Works of My Father, believe Me not: but if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the Works, that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father."

Thus, the miraculous phenomena recorded in the New Testament require to be regarded in a moral light. Our Lord Himself is the true Critic of His miracles, and we must listen to what He has to say

about them. In the economy of His Apocalypse, He assigned to them a specific function; but one which is interpretative rather than evidential. "Believe Me"—He said to one of His Apostles in the upper room—"believe Me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else, believe Me for the very Works' sake." The alternative was between a higher and a lower grade of spiritual apperception. A faith merely in His miracles might be the first step to a faith in Him. The bare credence of His power to work a miracle was not all that He wanted. Yet it might be all that He could secure at first from an unimaginative mind. And the outward spectacle of His miracles might prove a valuable experience. If the evidence of the physical sense was utilized aright, it ought to lead the disciple onward to the higher truth. For as the spectator studied the moral character of His Signs and Works, he would gradually perceive in them the disclosure of a Glory which was not of earth but Heaven. We who are Christians, therefore, do not believe in Jesus Christ because of His miracles. Rather, we believe His miracles because we believe in Him.

For the question has sometimes been asked whether it would not be possible, without any serious loss to genuine religion, to eliminate the miraculous from the New Testament. Such a proposal, of course, is suicidal for the members of the Christian Church. But it is not always seen to be irrational also. There are some amongst us who have been

fascinated by its specious glamour, and have shown themselves ready to pay too heavy a price for the semblance of intellectual concord. And there are many others also who fail to see the inwardness of our Lord's miracles. Could He not have dispensed with them altogether? Was there any real necessity for such a mode of operation? The God in Whom we believe is the God of Nature, and He is a God of order and harmony. Why, then, is He Whom we believe to be the Incarnate Son of God presented to us in the pages of the four Evangelists as constantly interfering with the processes of natural law? Are His Signs and Works at all in correspondence with the physical order of Nature? Do they not violate the laws by which God is governing the universe? And is not a belief in their historic reality fatally incompatible with a belief in the ultimate harmony of all things in Heaven and earth?

Well, the answer to such questionings is not far to seek. In my next address, I hope to show you something of the practical lesson of our Lord's miracles. And I must be content to indicate now that ethical fact which shows to us the secret of their interpretation. For it is altogether illogical to separate the Works from the Person of Jesus Christ: they are complementary to one another. Such miracles as the Transfiguration, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, are obviously one with that of His Person and the Virgin Birth. Nor could His Signs, as a whole, be abstracted from the evangelical

narrative without mutilating the picture of the Messiah beyond all recognition. His workings are an active manifestation of His Personality: without them our Lord would not be Himself. And we believe in Him *as He is*. We who are Christians—as I have tried to point out to you already—not only believe in the miracle of the Creation, but also in that of the Re-Creation of the human race. Thus, the miracles of the New Testament are part and parcel of the historic redemption of humanity. They fill up spectacular details in the portrait of the Christ, and form an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of Him. And, therefore, we must consider what was involved in the historic crisis of His Advent, by which the operation of the Creator's Energy was restarted, and the moral dynamic of Christendom was set at work.

For there was a mighty contrast between the miracle of the Creation and that of the Re-Creation of the human race. While the former was concerned only with the material universe, the latter embraced within its scope the world of man. And the moral order of the universe, though not independent of the physical, is the key to its ultimate unity. Now, the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ touch at times only the objects of physical nature. More often, however, they reach out to members of the human race. It is one thing to calm a storm on the Lake of Galilee: it is another thing, when He has landed from the ship, to end the turmoil within a madman's

soul. And the two planes within which His miraculous activity is seen at work are essentially different from one another. In the realm of material phenomena the laws of the Creator remain intact. The atoms of the visible universe are still absolutely controlled by the Will of Him Who called them into being. For "He spake the word and they were made; He commanded and they were created. He hath made them fast for ever and ever; He hath given them a law which shall not be broken." But, when we pass from the world of matter to the world of human life, the situation is completely altered. God's Will is here no longer unerringly obeyed. There has been, in the province of human affairs, a violation of the Divine Order of the universe. The moral laws of God have been outraged, and the sin of humanity has introduced a discord into the ideal harmony of Heaven and earth. For in Apostolic language, sin is "Lawlessness"—the only thing that is lawless in all the world. "He that doeth sin, doeth also lawlessness;" he transgresses the law of his own being, he breaks the norm of his moral nature. Herein lies the true secret of the interpretation of our Lord's miracles. For His Signs and Works, as we study them afresh, reveal Him to us as the "Christus Consummator" in both spheres alike.

For, consider. None of the miracles of Jesus Christ contravene the order of Nature. To change stones into bread, as the Tempter had proposed to Him, would have been a violation of the normal

course of things. And our Lord banished the idea, as suggesting falsehood about God. But to convert water into wine was quite in accordance with the proper work of Nature. And, by that first miracle in Cana of Galilee, as by His other Signs, Jesus Christ did but lay bare the Power that is ever active throughout the world of matter. The usual process was merely hastened. No new force was introduced. Our Lord did not even suspend the normal operation of law. He simply unfolded the secret of its energy. He showed us that the Force that does control this world of ours is not "unknown and unknowable," but the Will of a Personal God. Men ought to have seen God everywhere in Nature. But sin had blinded the eye of the soul, and hidden from men the truth that "earth," as well as Heaven, is "full of His Glory." The vision of the Omnipresent had been obscured. So, in momentary flashes of light, the Signs and Works of our Lord disclose that which lies behind all material phenomena. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Yes; His miracles do not break through the natural constitution of the universe. Rather, they make manifest to every one of His disciples the reality of that Divine Glory, of which Nature is at once the garb and veil. As Mrs. Browning says—

'Earth's crammed with Heaven,
And every common bush aflame with God ;
But only those who see take off their shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries !'

And then, passing on from the physical to the moral realm, we find again a revelation in the miraculous energy of Jesus Christ. For here the Divine Harmony has already become a discord, and evil has intruded its manifold activities into a world that was intended to be very good. The moral being of man is the sad exception to the Universal Reign of Law. Sin has violated the ideal order of the Universe, and cast its shadow upon the story of man's development. But our Lord came precisely to restore the broken order, and to give back life and health and strength to the human race. Such, indeed, is the essence of His Evangel. All around Him lay the products of human wilfulness. And His miracles, while they manifest the Presence of a Divine Power that is ever striving for the restoration of humanity, help to disclose at the same time the existence of a disease that has marred the entire fabric of society. As in His parables He was wont to expound the truths of the Kingdom of God, so too His miracles are the representative Signs of its historic Founder. To all who have the faith to see it, His Works show the reality of the Advent of that Divine Organism, through which the redemption of humanity is to be gradually fulfilled. "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, surely the Kingdom of God is come among you." Yes, it has, indeed. The miracles of our Lord are no violation of the laws of Nature. On the contrary, they make plain to us that which is the proper constitution of

the world. Not the natural order, but the unnatural did He come to destroy;¹ and in so doing, He revealed God's ideal for the human race. "The Kingdom of God!" in it the ultimate harmony of Heaven and earth consists.

Imagine yourself standing amidst the ruins of an English abbey, with an enthusiastic antiquarian by your side. A majestic and pathetic skeleton is all that you can see. A wall here, an archway there, a buttress, a window, a column—the fragments of the building that remain do but dimly reveal its ancient grandeur. Yet your companion can picture to himself the entire structure of the sacred edifice. By his knowledge of the Middle Ages, he can call up the past and visualise to himself all the former beauty of the fane. And he is eager that you should share his vision. He traces the ground plan of the abbey, and indicates the characteristics of its architectural style. He points to a bit of broken moulding, and shows you where it would have been set. As you follow him about, he draws before your mental eye a wondrous sketch of the whole, with all its scenery complete, with nave, and aisle, and transept, with chapels and altars, with façade, and pinnacle, and tower. So stood Jesus Christ, nearly two thousand years ago, amid the ruined Temple of Humanity. And, as we stand beside Him, listening to His burning words and watching His expressive actions, we too can see something of the ideal that

¹ *Vide* Appendix II., p. 262.

He has brought within our reach. His vision was of the future, not the past. He is Himself the Corner Stone. And, for almost twenty centuries, the New Structure has noiselessly been rising by the work of the labourers in the Christian Church. You and I have to add our contributions to the eternal Edifice of God.

IV

THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

"If I do not the works of the Father, believe Me not : but if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works ; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me and I in Him."
—ST. JOHN x. 37, 38.

WHY are there no miracles nowadays? The question is worth asking. But before we can answer it, we must try to understand its meaning. Romanists are not the only people who believe in the reality of modern miracles. A thing called "Christian Science" has recently appeared, and claims to have rediscovered the essence of the Gospel. Occultism, theosophy, and psychical *séances* have among their votaries men and women of no small intellectual capacity. And the late Mr. Haweis, who was always held to be the broadest of Broad Churchmen, felt himself compelled to avow that he could not disbelieve in the physical possibility of a miracle to-day. Such a chaotic state of affairs produces a sense of bewilderment in many minds. It seems impossible to discover a pathway between superstition and unbelief. Yet the problem is not really insoluble. As

I have more than once reminded you, it is upon the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ that we who are Christians have taken up our stand. The purpose of His Advent amongst us was the redemption of the human race from sin. And it is, therefore, in the moral character of His work that we are properly concerned. Such a thing as "Christian Science" does not interest us. There may be some grains of truth to be extracted from it. Yet they do but show that the relation between the spiritual and the material is more close than the world is apt to imagine, and that soul and body influence one another with mutual interaction. A "miracle" of "faith-healing" may serve as a useful illustration of the mode by which our Lord wrought many of His Signs. But that in which we are interested is not their physical, but their moral significance. We want to learn the ethical lesson of His miracles. Keeping this end before us, we shall consider in what sense it is true to say that the age of miracles has passed, and in what sense we are still living in an age of miracles.

Look, then, at the moral character of those Signs and Works, which "for us men and for our salvation" are said to have been wrought by our Redeemer. The vast majority are deeds of healing. Lepers and maniacs and paralytics are cured. The eyes of the blind are opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped, the tongues of the speechless loosened. Fevered frames and withered hands and halting

limbs are brought back to strength and vigour. Disease of the body gives way before the Presence of Jesus Christ. For He was anxious that men should be physically sound, and able to live out their lives upon this earth. He did not turn away from the present world. He was ever busy in reforming that which had in any way become deformed, in giving health for sickness, joy for sorrow, life for death. Thrice He recalled the spirits of the departed into their bodily tenements of clay, and on each occasion the person whom He raised from the dead had not completed the normal span of years. The widow's son was but a young man, and the daughter of Jairus a little maid; while Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, had not yet passed the prime of life. There was something unnatural about these early deaths. They had robbed God's earth of a possession which had to be restored. Nor did our Lord remain apart either from the work or the play of this world of ours. He mingled freely in the common business of society, and displayed His interest by many an act of kindliness. By turning water into wine at a wedding banquet, He not only relieved the embarrassment of His host, but enhanced the merriment of the whole company. Remembering the distance from which some of His listeners had come, He would not consent to dismiss the multitude until He had given them a meal that would save them from exhaustion on the journey home. And when the net was found to be full

of fishes by men wearied with a night of fruitless toil, the deed proved a blessing to those whose livelihood was always precarious, and whose means were generally scanty. Thus, our Lord's miracles are socially useful and benevolent. They are bodily and secular and earthly. They touch the needs of the "dim common multitudes" in town and country. They alleviate men's wants and difficulties and pains. In a word, they preach a Gospel to the poor.

And did not our Lord declare that such was to be the perpetual policy of His Church? A note of social democracy runs throughout the New Testament. The "Divine Carpenter" had a real "glad tidings" for the poor, so that "the common people heard Him gladly." At the commencement of His public Ministry, after He had stood up to read the Bible in the synagogue of His native village, He declared the fulfilment of the Scripture which spoke of Him and said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor." And His Evangel was one which He announced by deed as well as word. His actions, which men could see, were in complete accord with the utterances which they could hear. When two disciples of the Baptist came from the prophet's dungeon to ask, "Art thou He that should come? or do we look for another?"—"Go and show John again," replied the Messiah, "the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the

deaf hear ; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Such a reply was an appeal to the moral significance of His miracles. And, at His Last Supper in Jerusalem, He told His Apostles that His own Works were to be continued by His disciples. The good news which they were to proclaim to the people was to be preached by "miraculous" action. For the disciples who really believed in Him would do the same Works as He had done ; and even "greater" Works than these would they do, because He was going to the Father.

Now, it will be obvious to you already how a disciple can do the same works as Jesus Christ Himself: for a disciple is one who sees a revelation in his Master's actions. As our Lord is Himself "the Image of the Invisible God," so His deeds manifest to us God's Will. The things against which our Lord exerted Himself, are things which thwart God's purpose and design. They are social evils. The lawlessness of humanity has embodied itself in the outward and visible conditions of the world's order. Although the world is altogether good, the disease of human sin has spread its poison everywhere ; so that the existing fabric of society is always in part an expression of the sin of past generations. If the constitution of English society is very different from that of ancient Judæa, the evils which we have to combat are still the same. We must fight them in the Name of Jesus Christ. To regard social reform as a craze which is becoming

fashionable—as a work of supererogation, which may well be left to the enthusiasm of the faddist or the crank—is to regard the miracles of our Lord as a mere extra to His Gospel. The Church Militant here on earth, if she is to be true to herself, has to be militant against all the diseases of the body politic. Of course, doctors and nurses and philanthropists are each in their own way carrying on the Work of Jesus. And different people contribute in different ways to the ultimate triumph. But it is the entire army of social reformers, wherever they may be found, that are really engaged in “the Imitation of Christ.” Prevention is better than cure—it is more Christian. Private individuals are justly trying to heal the sores of English society. But much of their energy requires to be also turned into a public effort to eradicate the germs of our social maladies. For example, Christians have always been ready to build hospitals, and to support them liberally. They have not always been so ready, however, to exert themselves against foul rookeries and slums, against insanitary factories and laundries, against excessive hours of labour in shop and mine and office, and against pestilential and dangerous methods of industrial work. Yet these are the things that we ought now to do, while we do not leave the other undone. For the redemption of society can be furthered only by the action of society as a whole. The State—to quote the words of Dr. Westcott—“embodies in the temporal order the principles which

belong to the spiritual order, so far as they have been recognised in common life." To nations, and not only to individuals, the Kingdom of God has come. Acts of Government are not "interferences"—unless, after all, the anarchists are right! Every legislative assembly, from the House of Lords to the newest Parish Council, has opportunities of doing, or of refusing to do, the Works of Christ. And the "Gesta Christi," in the centuries that are past, are manifest indeed in the political history of Europe. Do not let us mutilate the Gospel of the Kingdom by regarding the amelioration of the social order as an "unspiritual" task. We sadly need the inspiration which it alone can bring.

And now we pass on to the second characteristic of the work of the Church Militant here on earth. For the significance of our Lord's miracles is far from being exhausted when we have found in them a justification of "divine discontent," and a stimulus to the crusade of social reform. It is a truism to say the character is more important than circumstances. And every reformer is well aware that an alteration of outward and visible conditions, if it is to be really conducive to human welfare, must be accompanied by an inward and spiritual change. The man himself, as well as his environment, has to be re-created. Here, then, within the hearts and minds and wills of men, lies the sphere within which the miraculous energy of our redemption is still at work. And as we turn again to the pages

of the New Testament, we find in it the documentary justification of our faith.

For in the Acts of the Apostles, as well as in the narrative of the Evangelists, the reader meets with a number of miracles. The story of Jesus Christ, and the history of His Church, both alike contain phenomena that are miraculous. Of course, some of the miracles narrated by the first historian of the Church are capable of an interpretation which is other than Apostolic. They can be explained in a manner different from that bequeathed to us by the Biblical writer, or by the Apostles whose utterances he has put on record. Had he been a reporter for a newspaper of the twentieth century, he would have narrated the history of the Apostolic age from another standpoint. The "cloven tongues like as of fire," for instance, which appeared on the morning of the Day of Pentecost, might be described as a ray of brilliant light shot down upon the company of the Apostles through a painted window. Such a comment, however, would simply leave us among the crowd outside, "amazed and in doubt, saying one to another, what meaneth this?" We want to have a further explanation of the gift of tongues. We listen gladly to the apology of Peter the Apostle, and we realise that the word of prophecy has been indeed fulfilled: God has at last "poured out His Spirit upon all flesh." Again, to take another famous instance, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus by "a light from Heaven" might be explained as due to

a sunstroke and a clap of thunder. Yet, while it is more than probable that such were the only things visible and audible to his companions, the interpretation that we really require is that which is given by the Apostle himself. Even the subjective, as well as the objective, experiences of the first Christians might have been otherwise narrated. To describe the visions which are said to have been seen by the Apostles as mere fancies, the product of enthusiasm and pious thought, may be quite legitimate; but it makes them in no sense more intelligible. Indeed, it only reduces our own history to chaos, and leaves the human spirit without a rational Interpreter. When we are told that the Holy Ghost said to the disciples, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," it would be equally true to relate that after prayer and mutual conference the Church at Antioch resolved to send out missionaries. Such a statement, however, would not be equally useful to those who are living in the Christian era. The comment of the inspired historian enables us to understand all the ages of the Church's history, and to explain the spiritual experience of her members. "I want a Bible"—as F. D. Maurice said—"to help me on that point; if I find that it does help me, I do not think that I shall improve it by merely transferring to it the very puzzles which require to be solved."

There are miracles, however, narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, which are not patient of any such

interpretation. They are miraculous from the physical standpoint, as well as from the moral. To deny the reality of such objective miracles, is to impeach the veracity of the historian on insufficient grounds. In the Book of the Acts, as in the rest of the Bible, we must begin by trying to realise the author's standpoint. The majority of the miracles which he records are the Acts of those who were believers in Jesus Christ. For in his preface he explains the contents of his narrative. His "former treatise"—the evangelical story—was an account of the "things that Jesus began both to do and to teach:" his second is the sequel to the first. It contains a record of the things which Jesus continued to perform in His Church by means of His disciples. The first miracle is typical of many. Two of the Apostles are entering the Temple, when a lame man seated at the Beautiful Gate begs of them the customary alms. They pause; and he looks up, expecting something different from that which he is about to receive. "Silver and gold have I none," says the Apostle; "but such as I have, give I thee. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." The speaker has seen that the beggar was not devoid of a nascent faith, and he is ready to exercise his Apostolic prerogative in his Redeemer's Name. And the effect of the miracle is electric. For the spot where it had been wrought was a public place, and the man was a familiar figure to the citizens of Jerusalem. The leaders of the Jewish Church are

dumbfounded. It is quite impossible to deny the reality of the fact. And when they demand of the Apostle "by what power" he had performed it, he told them the secret in his reply—"Be it known unto you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God hath raised from the dead, doth this man stand here whole among you." And after the Apostles had returned to the company of believers, they did not hesitate to pray for an increase of their miraculous power—"Grant unto Thy servants," they said together, "that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, by stretching forth Thy Hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy Holy Child Jesus."

There is an ethical difference, however, between the miracles recorded by the Evangelists, and those contained in the earliest history of the Church. The latter are destructive as well as constructive in their nature. They are Signs of Judgment no less than of Redemption. If Peter restored to life Dorcas, the friend of the poor, his words also caused the death of Ananias and Sapphira, who had "lied against the Holy Ghost." An angel of the Lord smote the imprisoned Apostle, and his chains fell off; but another angel smote Herod, and he died of an agonising and horrible disease. While Paul was glad to cure Æneas of his paralysis, together with the crippled man at Lystra, he also blinded

the eyes of Elymas, the magician, who had withstood his efforts to convert the governor of Paphos. And in this fact can be seen the significance of the miraculous phenomena recorded by the historian. Unlike those contained in the narrative of the four Evangelists, the miracles of the early Church were primarily evidential. The author of the Acts entitles them "Signs and Wonders"—being significant indeed to the faithful, but mere portents to the gaping world. Such an expression was only twice employed by our Lord Himself, and on each occasion it veiled a touch of irony. "Except ye see Signs and Wonders, ye will not believe!" had been His scornful greeting to those who had come to pray with the anxious father for his son's recovery. And He had told His disciples to beware of the impostors of the future, who would "display Signs and Wonders," such as would almost deceive His chosen flock. Yet He never described His own miracles by such a term. Thus, the "Signs and Works" of our Lord did not become "Signs and Wonders," until His Presence was no longer outwardly visible to men. The phrase is characteristic of the narrative of the Acts, in which it occurs nearly a dozen times, and once or twice in the Apostolic letters: Paul the Apostle, for example, includes his own "Signs and Wonders" among the things that have borne witness to his Apostolate. And the phrase used to describe the miracles is their proper commentary and interpretation. Frequent as they are in the

opening chapters of the historian's record, they diminish in number as the narrative proceeds, and have practically ceased before its close. For their function was essentially apologetic. They were an historical necessity. They ushered in the new age, proclaiming its Advent by a series of spectacular phenomena. They made manifest the truth that the Spirit of God had come to dwell within the Divine Organism of His Church. And the age of miracles will not have ceased, until also the days of the Church Militant here on earth are past and gone.

For there are miracles to-day, and they are in reality the same as those recorded in the history of the Apostolic Church. It is only their evidential concomitant that has disappeared. No longer are they outward and visible, no longer do they appeal to our physical senses, no longer are they concerned with material things. A miracle of such a character to-day would be an intolerable shock. It would shake—it would not strengthen—our faith in God. We who are Christians require no "Sign from Heaven," save that which we have already welcomed in the Personality of Jesus Christ. The need for sensuous miracles is past and gone. They were but a temporary necessity, and had come to an end before the decease of the Apostles. To go hankering after such a miracle to-day—whether in spiritualistic *séances*, or through holy relics, or by Christian Science—is an act of idolatrous superstition. For the Spirit of Truth has come, and He

dwells within us ; although the world cannot receive Him, because it sees Him not. We live in "an evil and adulterous generation," whenever men are disloyal to that relationship between God and humanity, whereof the Catholic Church is the abiding witness. The miracles of our age do not deal with the material environment of the human race : they touch but the souls of men. Yet they are utterly the same in essence as those of the New Testament. The same acts are still wrought, for the Personality of Jesus Christ is still tabernacled in our midst. Still within the Christian Church the miraculous activity of our Redemption is at work. Still does the Saviour cleanse the leprosy of sin, feed the hungry with the Bread of Life, and raise the dead by moral resurrection. Still does the Holy Ghost separate men and send them out on their distinctive walk in life. The tongues of the speechless are unloosened to preach the Gospel to the poor, the ears of the deaf are unstopped to hear and understand it, and the eyes of the blind are opened to see its truth. Have we not all had experience of the reality of such miracles as these ?

And such miracles are surely "greater" than any outward and visible act could ever be. Their appeal to our moral and spiritual sense is far more majestic than any that could be addressed to the senses of the body. "Occult Science" may be a seven days' wonder ; but the Person and Work of Jesus Christ is a "Sign from Heaven," that sheds a permanent

glory upon the things of earth. And He is the essence of His Evangel. Look round upon the world to-day, and you will find men of every race and clime acknowledging themselves to be standing in a unique relation to Him, and hailing Him as their Lord and Master. From within their own personal experience they can declare that He has cleansed their souls and fed them. He has loosened their tongues, and opened their eyes and ears to receive His Revelation of the Father. He has raised them from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The Christian Church has ever appealed to her history and to the experience of her children as a witness to the reality of miracle. If her modern testimony is not such as it ought to be, she confesses that the fault is all her own: for her unseen Head can do no miracles, so long as her members have no real trust in Him. Faith is still as ever the primary requisite of religion. Nevertheless, from age to age the Church of God throws down her challenge to the world. She repeats to all her Lord's ethical appeal. If in your generation she does not "do the Works of the Father," believe her not: yet, if she do, though ye believe not in the Personality of her Founder, "believe her Works"—credit the obvious fact of her moral contribution to man's welfare—that "ye may know, and believe," that the Spirit of the Father is in her, and that she is the Body of His Only-Begotten Son. Recognise in the Christian Church that which history has shown

to be the mightiest engine of human progress ; and if you are really desirous of moral refreshment and illumination, you will not reject the offer which she holds out on your behalf. Though you may not be able to believe her Gospel, you will not cut yourself off from her ministrations, and lose the blessing of her influence. And if you continue to do the Will of the Father, you will learn of the Church's doctrine whether it be of God, or whether she is speaking of herself. You will "know" by the verdict of personal experience, and you will "believe" by the enlightenment of your spiritual sense.

A word, then, in conclusion. All religion is miraculous. For, in its essence, religion is a bond, a link, a tie. And if it be a reality—if the relation between God and man is in any sense one of unity and moral reciprocity—man's desire for intercourse with Heaven, and God's response to human aspiration, must both alike be from first to last a miracle. For a miracle is simply a phenomenon that transcends the laws which are known to regulate the material universe ; while the human spirit is not a thing which can be dissected and analysed in a physiological laboratory, or interpreted by the scientific methods of the microscope. Man himself is a miracle. Spiritual phenomena belong to a world from which physical science is debarred for ever, and in which "the mysteries of God's Kingdom" are in truth the natural law. Therefore the human soul, athirst for knowledge and for strength, finds itself able to

welcome that which is miraculously kindred to itself
—the Revelation of the God in Whom all “live and
move and have their being.”

“What is thy thought? ‘There is no miracle’?
There is a great one, which thou hast not read,
And never shalt escape—thyself, O man!
Thou art thy Father’s copy of Himself,
Thou art thy Father’s Miracle. In sooth,
Man is the Miracle in Nature : God
Is the One Miracle to man.”

SOCIALISM
AND THE PATERNOSTER

I

THE DIVINE IDEAL

"Thy Kingdom come."—ST. MATTHEW vi. 10.

NO reader of the New Testament can fail to be struck by the constant recurrence of the phrase, "The Kingdom of Heaven," or "The Kingdom of God." It is used more than a hundred times by the trio of the Synoptic Evangelists. The call of John the Baptist to repentance is enforced by his proclamation that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Our Lord also commences His public Ministry with a similar announcement; and as He goes about the towns and villages of Galilee, it is "the Gospel of the Kingdom" that He preaches to the multitudes who flock to hear Him. The first and last beatitudes of His Sermon on the Mount declare that the Kingdom is to be a blessing for the poor, the poor in spirit, and for all who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; while its culminating exhortation is to "seek the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness" before all things else. The majority of the parables addressed to the crowd begin with the phrase, "the Kingdom

of Heaven." By miracle, too, as well as in parable, its Advent is being manifested to the world. When accused by the Pharisees of being in league with the powers of evil, our Lord replies that it is with the finger of God that He casts out devils, and that therefore "surely, the Kingdom of God is come" amongst them. In fact, the Kingdom is the characteristic note of all His teaching; while He is represented not only as its Herald, but its King. The question of the Oriental sages, "Where is He Who is born to be King of the Jews?" found an echo of its answer in the inscription fixed by Pilate on the Cross, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." As He stood before the Roman Governor, the Royal title that He claimed was a title to the throne in the Kingdom of the Truth. And the cry by which the populace secured His condemnation, "We have no King but Cæsar!" was the shout of a fickle and disloyal mob.

Then, after He arose from the grave, the same subject was the theme of His conversation. The forty days after His Resurrection were spent by Him in giving further instructions to His disciples about "the things concerning the Kingdom of God;" while the message which before His Ascension He bade them proclaim throughout the world, was described by Him as "the Gospel of the Kingdom." Nor had they any other tidings to announce. It was of "the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus" that Philip the deacon preached at Samaria, when persecution

drove the disciples from Jerusalem. At Antioch, at Thessalonica, and at Ephesus, a Kingdom was the topic of the discourse of the Apostle to the Gentiles. And the last glimpse of him which is given in Holy Scripture discloses him "preaching the Kingdom of God" in his captivity at Rome. Everywhere the story is the same. To preach the Gospel is to declare the Coming of the Kingdom upon earth. Its Advent in history is the dominant idea of the New Testament—nay, of the Bible as a whole. It is that which makes our Canon of Holy Writ an organic unity. Pictured in shadowy outline in the Theocracy of the Old Testament, the Kingdom is seen in the New in historic process of establishment among the sons of men.

Consider what such a Gospel meant to the patriotic Jew. When the Baptist announced on the banks of the Jordan that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, the whole nation leapt up in answer to his appeal. For the Messiah whom the Jews were expecting was but the central Figure in a Divine ideal of society—the Kingdom of the Christ—through which God's people were to realise their national destiny. The actual position of the nation, as tributary to the Roman Empire, was to the loyal son of Abraham an intolerable humiliation. And it was generally thought that, when the Messiah came, He would liberate His people from their degrading bondage, and reconstruct the fabric of Jewish society. The content of the popular hope, of course, would vary with different individuals. Among the devout,

who were awaiting "the Consolation of Israel," it would take a form less gross and worldly than among the populace as a whole or among the self-satisfied ecclesiastics. Nevertheless, that a new era, pregnant with vast changes, would be inaugurated by God's Messiah, was the universal sentiment of the Jews. The Advent of His Kingdom meant little less than the day-dawn of a social revolution. And the cry of the Baptist roused the people to believe that now, at last, the great consummation was in sight. Nor was their dream shattered by their Messiah. Our Lord always claimed to be the Fulfilment of their national longings. If they rejected the prospect which was held out to them, it was only because they were unable to perceive the secret of their national destiny, and the means by which their patriotic expectations were to be realized. When the people came and tried "by force to make Him a King," our Lord withdrew into the desert from their excited clamour. And He told the doctor of the law, who had come to interview Him secretly, that he must be born of water and of the Spirit before he could "enter into the Kingdom of God." Yet He comforted His Apostles, on the eve of His Crucifixion, by appointing to them a Kingdom in which they would be the judges of the twelve tribes of Israel, and promising that in it He would soon drink with them afresh the fruit of the vine. The question which they asked, on the mount of the Ascension, whether He was now to "restore the Kingdom to Israel," was

due to the fact that they still shared in part the misconceptions of their fellow-countrymen. They clung to their old ideals, and did not enter into the meaning of that which they had been privileged to witness. For God's Messiah had already redeemed His people. To accomplish His revolution He had required no arm of flesh: the weapons of His warfare were not carnal. He had relied solely on the authority of truth, the strength of righteousness, and the power of love. And He had succeeded in His stupendous object, and established the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

Yet few questions of Biblical interpretation are more difficult to answer than that which surrounds the phrase "the Kingdom of Heaven," or "the Kingdom of God." It seems to bear so many diverse significations, that it is hard to discover any salient idea under which they can be ranged, and by which they can be made to show their essential unity. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the Kingdom stands in intimate relation to the Christian Church. The word "Church" is hardly used by our Lord Himself, and He certainly did not draw up any explicit plan of organisation for His disciples. But He quite as certainly intended to found a Society, and spent most of His time in training the Apostles to be the primary directors of its career. To identify the Kingdom of God, however, with the Holy Catholic Church of the Apostles' Creed, is but to restate the problem in ecclesiastical rather than in Biblical phraseology.

The real difficulty lies, not so much in estimating the relation of the Church to the Kingdom, but in grasping it under the conditions of time and space. Ultimately, at the last analysis, the Church is the same thing as the Kingdom. But, here and now, they are not identical. The Kingdom is neither the actual nor the ideal of the Christian Church—it is both the ideal and the actual. It is a Heavenly order of society, of which the Church on earth is to be the historic witness. It is a reality of the present hour, with an infinite capacity for expansion and development. It is a realm of spiritual energy, a storehouse of moral forces, a treasury of Divine Graciousness, which the Church has to call upon the world to utilise and to make effective in every generation.

Is this, then, the Gospel that is being preached to us? It is not possible, I think, to exaggerate the loss which English religion has sustained in forgetting that the Advent of God's Kingdom is the central doctrine of the Bible. Preaching the Gospel is often held to be simply the announcement of some scheme of personal salvation, which is but a travesty of the Catholic Evangel of Jesus Christ. Not the Advent of His Kingdom upon earth, but the preparation of souls for their exit from earth to the Kingdom, is to a large extent the popular estimate of the Gospel. More than a hundred years have elapsed since Adam Smith was able to say that "religious instruction is a species of teaching of which the object

is not so much to make people good citizens in this world, as to prepare them for another and a better world in the life to come." But we have not yet altogether outgrown the influence of so pernicious a misrepresentation. Religion is still held to be "not of this world," but the next. Things sacred and things secular are set apart in water-tight compartments. Souls, and not bodies, are the media of our common worship; spirit, and not matter, is the theme of our popular theology; while the Divine and the human, united for all Christians by the truth of the Incarnation, have been torn asunder in unnatural divorce. A jejune and narrow Individualism has usurped the place of the rich and moving thought of the coming of God's Kingdom in our midst. His Kingdom is not a future, but an Eternal Kingdom—a Kingdom which is real in the present and the past, as well as in the future. It is at once a heritage, an actuality, and an inspiration. Far from being unrelated to the present world, its fundamental *raison d'être* is the redemption of all the world's concerns and interests; for it is through God's Kingdom that the moral order of society is to be reconstructed, and the human race is to realise its social destiny. And, therefore, we have been told to pray for its daily Advent.

Have we not here a Gospel which we sorely need to-day? The age in which we live is one of much uncertainty and change. We are experiencing "a distress of nations with perplexity" of no common

sort. For the Democracy has at last arrived, and with it has come the social question in the form of an imperious challenge to Church and State alike. In every Christian country "the sea and the waves are roaring," and the noise of the billows is thundering upon the ears of all who are striving to discern the signs of the time. There lies at the heart of modern society a burdensome feeling of social discontent. The sentiment of revolt is everywhere. To fancy that the world is but superficially agitated by it, "is simply to confess"—in the words of an American professor—"that one has been caught in an eddy of the age, and does not feel the sweep of its main current." At no previous era have so many people, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, philosophers and working-men, been so deeply stirred by the problems of human society, and so anxious to find a reliable solution. Men and women are everywhere busily engaged in trying to discover a practical means of remedying the tragedies and cruelties of modern civilisation. But the incoherent cry of the manual labourers, "We do not want charity—we want justice!" is finding such a response in the conscience of our generation, that the social question of the present age is "not simply a question of mitigating the evils of the existing order of society, but a question whether the existing order itself shall last." And, mingled with the demand for social reconstruction, can be heard on all sides a note of moral earnestness and a passionate desire for

righteousness and fraternity. Nevertheless, there are others to whom we seem to be on the eve of serious disaster. Distrusting the panaceas which are held out by the modern reformer, they realise only too vividly the weight of human inertia which bars our progress ; while some have lost all hope, and turned to the spurious philosophy of Continental Pessimism. Men's hearts again are "failing them for fear," as they look into the future and see "the things that are coming on the earth." The paralysis of a social Agnosticism has fallen upon us. Even so true a statesman as Mr. Balfour has been heard to say that "the future of the race is encumbered with darkness ; no faculty of calculation which we possess, no instrument which we are likely to invent, will enable us to map out its course or penetrate the secret of its destiny. . . . It is true that, as I think, much optimistic speculation about the future is quite unworthy of consideration by serious men. The best efforts of mankind have never been founded upon the belief of an assured progress towards a terrestrial Millennium." And the "philosophic doubt" of Mr. Balfour is shared by many who, though not philosophers, are Christians like himself.

But is it not just at such a time as this—"when these things begin to come to pass"—that our Lord exhorts all of those who believe in Him to "look up, and lift up our heads ;" for then is our "redemption to be drawing nigh." If we can respond to His invitation, assuredly we shall "see the Son of Man

coming" in the social and intellectual unsettlement of our generation—"coming in the clouds," so that only the believer's eye can discern Him through "the blood and fire and vapour of smoke." Is He, then, finding faith upon the earth?—faith in Him, and in the truth of His Evangel, and in the reality of the Kingdom of God? Do we recognise that His Gospel is essentially a social Gospel, and that it deals with the whole world and its inhabitants as members of a spiritual polity? Are we praying for the progressive realisation of God's Ideal of Society? Every sphere of human toil, every province of human thought, every department of human activity, lies now within its range. The kingdom of labour and of trade, the kingdom of politics and industry, the kingdom of science, the kingdom of art, the kingdom of literature—all the varied kingdoms of humanity are already included within the scope of God's Dominion; while the subjects of each have to bring into it their contributions, and lay them at the feet of Him Who is the King of kings. It is just in so far as men have acknowledged the fact of His universal Sovereignty—as they have learnt that, being His subjects, they have to discover His laws and claim the protection of His government—that the Divine revolution of society has been going forward. The story of Christendom is but an Apocalypse of the meaning of His Reign. And, in our generation, His Spirit of Truth has been shed abroad more widely and fully than at any previous stage in Christian history. Our

young men are having dreams, and our old men have been seeing visions, while our handmaidens and bondservants are prophesying. There *is* a Divine ideal towards which the world is moving. There *is* a social order that is gradually being established in our midst—an order which is not of earth, but Heaven. There *is* a Personality, even Jesus Christ, on Whose guidance we can rely in the midst of our modern perplexities. For it is He in Whom all things consist, and He has revealed Himself that we may know the destiny of our race, and press onward bravely and faithfully to its appointed goal. It is of the essence of His Gospel to believe in an “assured progress” of humanity, and the noblest efforts of man have always been based on such a hope. Indeed,

“To put more faith in lies and hate
Than truth and love, is the real Atheism.”

And every prayer for the Advent of God’s Kingdom is a prayer for the destruction of all falsehood and injustice and hypocrisy, for the triumph of truth and righteousness, and for the coming of that Social Ideal in which sincerity and peace and brotherhood will reign on earth.

Here it is that we come face to face with a thing called Socialism. There are still some people, of course, who regard a Socialist as a dangerous person—something between a burglar and a lunatic—and who are equally anxious to have him put under lock and key. Yet the Anarchist, who goes to the stake

for the cause of revolution, and poses as a modern martyr, is but a fanatical caricature of a faith which is noble in itself, and which claims many a disciple of greater sanity and moral sense. "Socialism" is a word that has been applied to many things, ranging from the sanguinary tactics of a Russian student to the subject of a political epigram by an English statesman. It has no necessary connection with either robbery or madness. In its essence, it is an ideal of a Collective Society, in which the instruments and the materials of production, exchange, and manufacture shall be owned and controlled by the entire community. But it is not merely as a programme of economic reconstruction that it has inspired thousands—nay, millions—of men and women with an enthusiastic hope. It is because it has come to them as a religion. Underneath all its varieties of expression, as the late Bishop of Durham pointed out, a number of general characteristics can clearly be seen. It is, he said, "the opposite of Individualism; while it is by contrast with Individualism that the true character of Socialism can best be discerned. The two terms correspond with opposite views of humanity. Individualism regards mankind as made up of warring atoms; Socialism regards it as an organic whole, formed into a vital unity by the combination of interdependent members. It follows that Socialism differs from Individualism both in method and aim. The method of Socialism is co-operation; the method

of Individualism is competition. The former regards man as working with man for a common end; the latter regards man as working against man for private gain. The aim of Socialism is the fulfilment of some kind of service. The aim of Individualism is the attainment of some personal advantage—riches, or place, or fame. Socialism seeks such an organisation of life as shall secure for every one the most complete development of his powers. Individualism seeks primarily the satisfaction of the particular wants of each one, in the hope that the pursuit of private interests will in the end secure public welfare."

Such were the words uttered, more than a decade ago, by the greatest prophet of the modern Church. And if he is right in his contention that Socialism and Individualism represent such an antithesis as this, it is easy to see which is in accord with the tone and spirit of the New Testament and of the Old. Socialism is certainly capable of being far more than an economic theory, or a political system, or an industrial organisation. For its characteristic principles are not very far removed from those of the Kingdom of God. Nor has such a fact escaped the notice of the Socialists themselves. Some of their official pioneers, of course, have been frankly atheist and materialist in their professed philosophy. But a far larger number of their modern followers think that they can find in the Bible, in the prophets of the Old Testament, and especially in the Figure

of our Lord Himself, a justification of their social doctrine. Tolstoi discovers in the teaching of Jesus Christ a theoretic Anarchism. And He is claimed by many as an "Agitator" and a "Revolutionary." The Carpenter of Galilee, with His woes for the rich and His blessings on the poor, His friendship for the social outcasts, His reiterated denunciations of hypocrisy and mammon-worship, and His fearless attack in the interests of religion upon orthodox dogma and conventional morality—to Him, stripped of all theological disguises, the more thoughtful of the industrial masses are not unready to render their homage and respect. "We used to think," says a modern workman, "that Christ was a fiction of the priests . . . but now we find that He was one of us, a poor working-man, Who had a heart for the poor. And now that we understand it, we say that He is the Man for us." Nor is such a sentiment confined to the manual labourers of society. On all sides men are turning to the Gospels with a new interest in the Portrait of Humanity which is depicted there. The "pale Galilean" is on the eve of another victory, since "the world has gone after Him" again in search of His essential teaching. Indeed, to many a soul in our generation, "the real Jesus"—as Professor Peabody has remarked—"seems to have been rediscovered, as though beneath some mediæval fresco of a mystical Christ there had been freshly laid bare the features of the Man of Nazareth."

Here, then, is assuredly "a perplexing situation!"

What fellowship has the Christ of the Church's worship with the labour-leader and Socialist of to-day? The question is one which has been forcing itself for some time upon the conscience of Christendom; and not within one generation will an adequate reply be found. The Church has many a lesson to learn from modern Socialism. We do not, of course, require to adopt as our own every item in the programme of the modern Collectivists. But we do require to be convinced of the validity of the truths which they assert. We need to be reminded of the fact that God has an ideal for society, and that the "Millennium" revealed in the New Testament is a terrestrial as well as a celestial organisation. Nor must the ecclesiastical world forget that the Gospel of the Kingdom is also the Gospel of the Son of Man. It was as Man that He drew His first disciples around Him, and only by degrees did the love of the Man lead onward to the worship of the Incarnate God. To begin with a transcendental Figure, wrapped in mystic dogma, is to present for the adoration of the industrial masses an Object Which is largely overshadowed by a halo of unreality. The story of the Evangelists is not the story of One Who is simply the Centre of a doctrinal system: it is the story of One Who is utterly and completely Human. Above all, it is the story of the Foundation of the Kingdom of God. And our debt to Socialism is that it has made us recall the Social Ideal of the Gospel, and bring religion down from Heaven to

earth. While we refuse to predict in detail the characteristics of the future polity, we must be ready to prophesy its Advent in every age. For "so is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knows not how." Yet, in his ignorance, he has been told to pray, "Father, Thy Kingdom come."

II

HUMAN PROGRESS

"Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."—
ST. MATTHEW vi. 10.

THE Paternoster is the model of all prayer, not only in its actual wording, but also in the order of its petitions. Each hangs vitally upon those which precede it. The prayer for the Advent of God's Kingdom passes into a prayer for the doing of His Will. And let us note that the words "on earth, as it is in Heaven," belong also to the two previous clauses. In the punctuation of our Book of Common Prayer, each of the earlier petitions ends with a full stop—in order that, when the Paternoster is said in tone, the clerk and the choir may see where to pause and take a breath! But, if musically useful, the expedient is practically disastrous, in that it is apt to obscure for many a worshipper the significance of the language which is put upon his lips. The meaning of the words is more apparent in the original. "Hallowed be Thy Name on earth, as it is in Heaven," and "Thy Kingdom come on earth, as it

is in Heaven," lead on to the petition "Thy Will be done." Each clause is practical, but the last is the most explicit of the three. For the Will of God is that which He wishes to be done—done by the activity of human beings. We are to be the agents, each one of us, in the world's progress. We cannot, it is true, alter the goal towards which all things on earth are moving. But we can hinder or hasten their advance. God is not another name for Fate. Nor is His Will a synonym for some dread and awful Power—some blank inscrutable Omnipotence above us—to which the sooner we submit the better. The "Nemesis" of the Greeks is not the Christian Name of God. The mysteries of the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father are no longer secrets. In disclosing Himself to us, He has revealed the truth that His Will is a Will of Good towards all His creatures. It is not a passive, but an active thing. And therefore the prayer that it may be done on earth does not rob us of the power to act. On the contrary, it stirs the fulness of our energy. It rings on our ears with an unceasing challenge. It calls us to labour for God's Kingdom.

For no one, as F. D. Maurice told us, can learn the meaning of this prayer, until he has first tried to hallow the Name of Him to Whom it is addressed. The "Name" of God is that by which He is known to human beings. While He has revealed Himself under diverse titles to various nations at different epochs, in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son. And that Name, the Name of Jesus,

unfolds to us the reality of the spiritual kinship between God and man ; and shows us that, in so far as we strive to reproduce in our own wills the Will of God, we are fulfilling the law of our own nature. To us the Will of God is the right, the true, the good. It is what is meant by the word "morality." For all moral action carries us beyond ourselves. Religion, of course, is not the same thing as morality. Religion is the progressive consciousness of God. In Biblical terminology, it involves the element of "faith" as well as "works." All works, however, are the product of some kind of faith: so that a belief in God as the Absolutely Good is the greatest of all inspirations after goodness. And the Name which we have to hallow is that of "the Lord our Righteousness." For the God in Whom Christians believe is a Moral Being, the Embodiment of all virtues, which perfect in Him are embryonic in humanity. Wisdom and Holiness, Justice, Mercy, and Love, as they disclose themselves in man, are an Epiphany of the Divine Nature. And the call of duty, the demand of the moral law, the appeal of conscience—each speaks to us of the Will of Him in Whom we "live and move and have our being." Although religion is far from being a "mere morality," morality is a religion. If the Will of God is a Righteous Will, the love of Righteousness is a love of God Himself. In striving after the right, the true, and the good, we are not simply trying to strike a balance between the claims of a transient

“social organism” and of our own selves—we are also realising our union with the Spirit of the Universe. We are binding ourselves afresh to an anchor which even the shock of death cannot loosen or dislodge. For “the world passeth away . . . but he that doeth the Will of God, abideth for ever.”

All morality, then, reaches upward into God. But morality is a progressive thing. In the familiar words of Lowell—

“New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward,
Who would keep abreast of Truth.”

Now, the unique vitality of the Gospel—its inherent deathlessness—is due to the fact that it presents the ultimate ideal for human morals. If morality is but the gradual evolution of the Divine Nature in man, the moral Ideal must be the Revelation of God Himself. And the *summum bonum* for humanity must be the reproduction of God's Blessedness in us. We who are Christians believe that in Jesus Christ we have a perfect Manifestation alike of the human and of the Divine. To us He is more than Prophet: He is also Priest and King. Jesus Christ has not simply left for His disciples a series of ethical precepts. His Sermon on the Mount is not an exposition of maxims, but a declaration of the fundamental principles that underlie all morality. To attempt to draw up from a study of the evangelical records a lofty code of ethics, and to regard it

as the essence of our Lord's contribution to the moral progress of the world, is to mistake the letter of the Gospel—which by itself assuredly would kill us—for the Spirit That alone can give us life. As Prophet, our Lord came to re-edit the Mosaic law : but as Priest, He came to take away the guilt of moral failure ; and as King, to bestow grace upon the human spirit, to claim the loyalty of the human heart, and to prevent the backsliding of the human will. He came, in short, not primarily to tell us what we ought to do, but to show us what we ought to be, and to help us towards a realisation. He came to stimulate in us the pursuit of all that is right and true and good. And His Church was dowered by Him with the Presence of His Spirit, because He had much to say to His disciples which they could not receive once for all from His lips, but which the Spirit of Truth Himself would teach them down all the ages. The content of the Will of God was to be gradually revealed. As God's Spirit taught the Church, so in turn she would teach the world, and thus human society would advance towards God's ideal. And throughout the whole course of Christian history—nay, throughout all history—it is our Lord Who has been the inspiration of moral progress. For He is "the Light that lightens every man," and now He has "come into the world" of modern culture and civilisation.

Herein lies the prophetic vocation of the Church. While the State can but deal with the external order

of society, the Church deals with the internal fabric of human nature. And both of them are "fellow-labourers into the Kingdom of God." How to adjust and maintain the true relation between them has been one of the tragic difficulties of Christendom. Here in England we are still suffering from the influence of an obsolete ideal, which identified Church and State, and merged "the things of God" in "the things of Cæsar." And, in attempting to escape from a false position, we are in danger of running to the opposite extreme, and thinking that our end can best be reached by a complete severance of religion from the temporal power. Yet the ideal of the Gospel presents to us a better solution of the problem. All the things of Cæsar are included in the things of God: for the consecration of the world is the true end of religion. "Perfected civilisation," as Browning saw, is but "fully developed Christianity." Church and State are not enemies, but allies in the work of human progress. And if in the past the alliance between them has resulted, not in a "religious" world, but in a "worldly" religion, it is the Church and not the State which has been to blame. She has been content to play the *rôle* of a "moral policeman," and forgotten that she has a prophetic function to fulfil. The moral prerogative of the Church has been allowed to fall out of the view of Churchmen. Her mission to the world has been obscured. She has to leaven the mass, to quicken the social conscience, and to inspire public opinion by the vision of

a great ideal. It is the duty of her members to raise the popular standards of right and wrong by reference to the standard of the New Testament. They have to act as men who know that "there is another King" than Cæsar, even Jesus Christ. For to all of His disciples, "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." The Christian Church is to be the ethical teacher of humanity. She is to be the pioneer of moral progress and enlightenment. She is to apply and re-apply the Christian law to the social order of the day, holding out the ideal in one hand, while with the other she points to its practical requirement. In a word, she has to discover and expound the Will of God. As one of her modern critics has justly said, "It is not enough to preach the Golden Rule: it is necessary to say in concrete detail what the Golden Rule involves to-day."

And it is in the discharge of this duty, more than in anything else, that the Church has failed. Not only in times of spiritual sloth and degradation, but even in eras of movement and revival, she has not emphasised aright the ethical aspect of religion. Not unready to "go in search of those who are lost," and to recreate the individual character, she has often lost sight of her social obligations. Many a time history has found her neglecting the study of the moral law, and exalting the demand of Ritual at the expense of Righteousness. Such is, indeed, the characteristic peril of Ecclesiasticism. And, as such, it receives from Jesus Christ the most scathing

denunciation of the New Testament. "Hypocrisy," however unconscious it may be, is the greatest of all vices. The spirit of ecclesiastical insincerity—that spirit which is glad to hear men "say 'Lord! Lord!'" and not urgent also to see that they "do the Will" of the Heavenly Father—has always been the most subtle temptation of the Christian Church. She has not taken to heart the story of her predecessor, and the moral decadence of Judaism has reproduced itself in Christian history. It is possible, of course, to exaggerate the extent to which the Church has failed, or still is failing, as an exponent of social morality. To be anxious to excommunicate from among the faithful all whose canon of duty falls outside one's own personal conviction, is not always a mark of moral knowledge, nor even of moral zeal. Impatience is as real a danger as hypocrisy. It is only an unscriptural fanaticism which will not tolerate the presence of tares among the wheat in God's Kingdom. Nevertheless, to rest content with "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" has been emphatically the greatest sin of the Christian Church. And it is her most patent defect in the face of modern civilisation. She has often not had the courage to come forward and attest the Will of God. She has been satisfied with the conventional morality of the world, and refused to lead the nations boldly in the way of social righteousness.

How, then, can the present tangle be rearranged? In view of the past history of the National Church,

despair is impossible to any Englishman. Yet we shall need much patience and earnestness and charity. We have to see our end and steadily pursue it. And that end is to justify God and the Righteousness of His Kingdom to the world of to-day. The members of the Church have to be convinced of the ethical implications of their membership; while the Church as a corporate body, in her parishes and dioceses, and in the nation as a whole, has to regain and develop a capacity to discharge her duty as the "Conscience" of the social organism. Nor is the call one that can brook delay. The Church has an important work to do as the ally of a Christian State. Much social legislation remains inoperative for want of a sturdy and enlightened moral sense. Local government sometimes falls into the hands of those who have axes of their own to grind, or whose friends are interested in the perpetuation of some scandal. Statutes, however beneficent in purpose, require honesty of administration. Increasingly will the executive of the modern State make a demand upon civic character. It must, therefore, be brought to recognise that, in all its functions, it is in truth "God's minister" for the welfare of His people. And it is from the Church that the moral stimulus ought to come. Problems of social reform are looming up more and more upon our domestic horizon. The housing of the poor, the regulation of the drink traffic, the question of old-age pensions, of the "unearned increment," and of municipal

enterprise and control—all these are at bottom ethical problems. And if the Church has nothing to say about them, she is simply confessing that again she has failed to “know the day of her visitation.” For example, to discuss whether private property in land is a justifiable institution, is doubtless a topic of purely academic interest. But when the point at issue, in some question about housing or taxation, is the relative weight of the rights of a class of landlords and of the weaker members of the community as a whole, it is the function of the Church to remind the world in no uncertain tones that God is no Respector of persons, and that “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” Compensation threatens to become the practical question in many departments of social reform. And, although in our House of Commons we certainly “want science and not sentiment,” we want the justice of a Christian State to be mercy also.

And, beyond the area of such legislative and administrative reform, there is a vast field of moral energy that lies uncultivated before the Church. Our Lord bestowed upon her an authority to formulate a Casuistry for her members. The power of “binding and loosing” has a scope much wider than the discipline of the Confessional: it is the power to declare what is “of faith” in the details of social action. It is true that character, not conduct, is the primary concern of the New Testament. Yet the Christian character must reveal itself in social

conduct, and it is the true function of the Church's Discipline to discover and proclaim what action is legitimate for a Christian. Nor has she merely to state the lowest terms of her requirement, but gradually to strike the balance of the highest possible. Of course, such a task is beset with many difficulties. In order to promulgate aright the policy which is demanded by the Christian Law in modern civilisation, the Church will require the loyal co-operation of her members in study and conference and inquiry. Yet the call for action here again is more than urgent. Many forms of trade are permeated with customs and practices that are wholly illegitimate. Through the bitter stress of competition the world is ceasing to believe in the supremacy of anything save the dollar in modern business. Commerce is apt to degenerate into a selfish and unscrupulous scramble, in which men of probity find themselves fighting a forlorn and lonely battle. They are not unwilling to act justly. But the price of commercial honour is sometimes more heavy than they are willing to pay; while they look in vain for any means of creating mutual confidence and making a stand against iniquitous dealing. There is a crying need of something, alike rural and urban, alike national and parochial, round which the best moral sentiment of the day can freely congregate. Is not this the unique opportunity for the modern Church? Concentration as well as comprehension ought to be her watchword, and reality rather than

numbers her unceasing aim. If a new Reformation is now required, it is one of conduct rather than of doctrine. Mammon, not "Popery;" selfishness, not ritualism—these are the enemy.

Here, then, is the ultimate object of all Church Reform. We have to rally to the Christian standard all the elements that contribute to the moral welfare of society, so that the Church may more adequately fulfil her *rôle* as the organ of social progress. The ecclesiastical situation, of course, has itself to be readjusted. There are many defects and anomalies and abuses, which the Church has to remedy, in the organisation of her parochial and diocesan system. She must regain from the State her prerogative—long in abeyance—to manage her own affairs, and to adapt herself to the changing environment which she encounters in the modern world. But all reform of ecclesiastical procedure and machinery will be of value, only in so far as it conduces to the moral efficiency of the Church as the embodiment of social justice and integrity. In her anxiety to set her own house in order, she must not be allowed to forget that her rightful task is the redemption of society as a whole. And as she learns the meaning of her prophetic duty, and strives more widely to discharge it, she will assuredly find a response to her appeal for help. There is much genuine enthusiasm for righteousness in our midst to-day. It not only exists in the world of business, but it is also scattered throughout every section of society. But it can

manifest itself only in isolated individual effort here and there; while at times it is dissipated in vague denunciation and fruitless dreams, and requires the discipline of a sanctified common sense. Zeal and knowledge must be blent, if we are to escape "the falsehood of extremes," which are the Scylla and Charybdis that always beset the progress of practical reform. And it is the ideal characteristic of the Church, not only to inspire the social conscience, but also to stand out as its common focus, so that its dictates may be brought to an effective issue. As Dr. Gore says, she has to "buy up the opportunity" that lies before her, enlisting her members for a new crusade, and showing the world that she is in earnest. She has to enforce, not a scheme of ecclesiastical dogmas, but the Righteousness of God's Kingdom upon society. She has to "let her light shine" before men, that they may see the goodness of her social programme, and realise that she is indeed a City set upon a Hill. For the reform of the world is only possible through the manifold activity of the Church Reformed. All the way along the Will of God is to be our inspiration. For the cry "God wills it!" has not lost its ancient power, as the watchword of the Armies of the Cross. That Will is a Will of unity and truth, of sacrifice and love and justice. We who are Christians have to make it felt in modern civilisation. For the Son of God Himself has come among us, in order to buy back the human race from the rule of Satan, and to claim

for Himself the Dominion of the world. Therefore He has told us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done *on earth*—on this earth of Thine—as it is in Heaven."

And how, then, is it done in Heaven? Round us there exists a wondrous universe. This earth is but one of a number of whirling planets, while the telescope is ever discovering new systems in the infinite abysm of space. All these celestial bodies are calmly moving in obedience to natural law. There they are, a world of majestic order and harmony, subject altogether to the unchanging Will of God, rolling onward without speech or language, yet voicing by their rhythmic motion "the Music of the Spheres." But when we pray that God's Will may be done here "as in Heaven," we do not simply ask that human society be reduced to an order and harmony such as that which pervades the celestial universe. The obedience of the astronomical bodies is primarily a mechanical fact. Although "the firmament sheweth the Handiwork of God," it cannot be said in itself to reproduce His Will. For moral action is the prerogative of moral beings. And if God be a Moral Being, His Will can be done only by creatures who are kindred to Himself. There is a celestial army, however, the host of God's Angels, endowed by Him with all the faculties of human nature, who have become the invisible instruments of His activity. It is they who direct the processes of Nature, who give to

the firmament its speech and language, and who translate the world's mechanism into spiritual order. The system of the Heavens is tenanted by other things than energy and matter: it is full of spiritual intelligences, of creatures capable of moral action, of beings who might have, but have not, refused to serve Him, Who created and sustains the universe. For "Heaven" is not some imaginary spot beyond the clouds, but the unseen universe—the other of God's worlds—the home of myriad Companies of Angels, who have become God's heralds to the human race. His Angels do His Will, directing the powers and forces of Nature, and protecting, warning, and encouraging the sons of men.

Yes, if we are to understand the meaning of the Paternoster, we must realise what is meant by Heaven and its inhabitants. Nowadays we have hardly any faith in their existence. No longer do we seem to believe in Angels, whether good or bad. It has been cleverly remarked that the Devil never played a more cunning trick upon humanity than when he persuaded us to give credit to a report of his decease. And not only has he long been "shamming dead," but he has robbed us of a belief in the reality of the Angels alike in Heaven and Hell. We have lost faith in the tenants of the spiritual universe. We have banished Heaven to some distant star, and forgotten that it is a world, full of the play of invisible forces, in the midst of which we are standing every hour. We have ceased

to trust in the spiritual ministrations of those angelic beings, whose activity on our behalf is witnessed everywhere in the pages of Holy Writ. But the Prayer of Christendom, as we learn to use it, will "open our eyes to see" the Hosts of Heaven. There is an innumerable Company around us fighting for the cause of God. Every member of that countless army has discovered that work is worship, and that the service of humanity is his highest good. It is to an obedience such as that which is offered by God's Angels that the hearts and wills of all men are to be conformed. We pray that every human being may be won from self to God, that the family of our human race may be united and inspired by a loyal devotion to the Father, and that all earthly activity may become a reflex of the Angels' work. We pray that, like the Heavenly hosts, humanity may become an army of fellow-labourers with God, linked one to another in an unselfish rivalry of ministration, and finding in the pursuit of the Divine Will the secret of human liberty. For the service of God is perfect freedom.

For it is in the appendix to this petition that we discover the character of the Socialism which it demands. It shows to us the meaning of human progress. For progress is moral progress, and moral progress is the growing conformity of human wills on earth to the Will of our Heavenly Father. The progress of God's Kingdom is by the doing of His Will. And thus we see again, as the unique

characteristic of its Advent, that it "cometh not with outward show." We who believe in the Gospel of the Kingdom cannot say, "Lo here!" or "Lo there!" as we point to any particular item in a programme or to any special panacea for social ills. To identify the coming of the Kingdom with the Advent of a Co-operative Commonwealth, is to yield to the temptation which our Lord resisted, when Satan offered to exchange with Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. It is as great a delusion as to regard it as wholly unrelated to the advance of political and economic reform. And if there are many Christians who fail to perceive the Socialism of the Gospel, there are "false prophets" also who have arisen and led some of their disciples away with a fallacious hope. God's Kingdom is not ushered in by the turmoil of an election or by the abolition of a foetid slum. It works downwards from above, and then upwards and outwards from within. Its Advent is a twofold process, material and visible upon the one side, and upon the other spiritual and unseen. It is the Sacrament of Christian history. Hence, it does not consist in heroic schemes of reform. It does not simply mean a better education, a better house, a better wage. It does not merely involve the municipal directorship of public works and interests, or the nationalisation of the drink-traffic, the railroads, or the land. Such changes, indeed, may come upon us, and may be truly conducive to our social progress. Yet in no way can they be said

to constitute in themselves the Advent of that Ideal which is demanded by the Gospel. First of all God's Kingdom has to come within the hearts and wills of men. Its revolution is a spiritual process within the human soul. And day by day it is going forward, although we see it not with our outward sense of sight. God's Empire is, indeed, spreading throughout all the world. Founded, not upon the bayonets of a standing army or the bulwark of an iron fleet, but upon the Person of the Risen and Ascended King, and ratified by no Royal signature save the personal endorsement of individual wills, His Kingdom is widening its borders and hastening its triumph on this earth of ours. It is coming—but still "with no outward show." The Spirit of the Divine Monarch is even now at work within us, subduing all that is base and selfish, and inspiring all that is strong and beautiful and true. For the Kingdom of God is "not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

III

INDUSTRIAL ORDER

“Give us this day our daily bread.”—ST. MATTHEW vi. 11.

IT is often thought that the Old Testament is less spiritual than the New. The rewards of the Jewish dispensation, it is said, were temporal blessings: those of the Christian are eternal. The Israelites were exhorted to walk in the way of God's commands in order that their national welfare might be made secure: we are told to fix our hearts upon a life in the world to come. Religion brought to the Hebrews worldly prosperity, success in war, and domestic and social happiness: to follow Christ is to bear His Cross on earth, and hope to reign with Him in Heaven. Such language is not uncommon. It produces a sense of unreality and listlessness, which is the death-knell of true religion. For it represents, as F. D. Maurice said, one of those popular delusions about the Bible, which as effectively prevent an intelligent use and study both of the Old Testament and of the New, as the idols overthrown by Bacon prevented all rational inquiry

into Nature. We who believe in the Advent of God's Son cannot possibly "think that this present world has lost some of the sanctity which it possessed" in the eyes of His ancient people. He Who was the God of the Hebrews is the God of Christendom, and He has come now to plant His tabernacle for ever among the sons of men. The welfare of a Christian nation cannot be less dear to Him, nor can He be less intimately concerned with our temporal and material prosperity. The Covenant of the New Dispensation is, indeed, more profoundly social than the Old, just because it is not temporary, but eternal. And in the Dominical Prayer of Christendom we are taught to ask God to supply the needs of our bodies before we pray Him to grant refreshment to our souls. Our first direct petition for ourselves is, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Now, He Who has told us to use this prayer was on more than one occasion in want of food. His stress of work was such that sometimes He had "no leisure so much as to eat." He knew what it was to experience the pangs of hunger. For His human Body—the Flesh and Blood within which His Divine Personality was enshrined—was of exactly the same texture as that of other men. Once, at least, He was reduced to the verge of actual starvation. For forty days He had been in the desert, undergoing the struggle of a temptation with the spiritual powers of evil. There, amid the arid waste of sand and rock, exposed to the chilly dews of night and the

blaze of the sun at noontide, He had spent over a month in solitude, tasting nothing. And then the thought was suggested to Him that, if it was a true voice from Heaven which had told Him at His Baptism that He was the Son of God, there was no reason why He should not exercise His Divine prerogative by commanding the stones which lay at His feet to become bread. But our Lord knew that the suggestion was a voice from Hell. Not for any personal satisfaction had God sealed Him in Baptism as His Son. Despite the pangs of hunger He had the faith and courage to fall back upon the Providence of His Heavenly Father. And He drove the Devil's whisper from Him by quoting from the Bible of the Jewish Church—"It is written, 'Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'"

And, as we consider the meaning of His reply, we find in it the keynote of the petition which we are now considering. By His answer to Satan our Lord did not mean to say that man does not live by bread. Man does. The human frame is a thing that must be nourished by food and drink. The flesh and the blood, of which our bodies are composed, require a material substance to sustain them. When the supply of provisions fails, we human beings die of famine. Nor did this Hebrew text merely serve to remind Him that a time will come to every human being, when earthly resources are no longer able to keep him alive. He had not yet

Himself reached the three-score years and ten, which are the normal span of human life. Nor, again, did this ancient sentence simply mean that man has a soul, and that man's soul does not live by bread alone. The temptation which our Lord had to meet derived its strength from the fact that it was addressed to His bodily necessities at that very moment. And if in His reply He had shifted the ground from the present to the future, or from the material to the spiritual, it would have involved a surrender to the Devil's scepticism. As a matter of fact, however, our Lord did not shirk the point at issue. The saying that He quoted from the Old Testament was an assertion of the truth that, if human beings live by bread, they do not live by bread alone. For the virtue of bread, as a means of human sustenance, together with the capacity of the human body to assimilate its nourishment, is a thing given by God Himself. Bread "alone" would be worthless to us. Behind all physical processes in the womb of Nature, the Eternal Word of God is ever in operation, and the fruits of the earth are but a manifestation of His productive energy. Without His unceasing activity, food and drink would immediately lose their power to nourish our mortal frames; for there is no life apart from Him, Who is the Preserver as well as the Creator of all mankind.

And is not this a truth that is "writ large" upon the story of the Old Testament? From the time when the children of Israel first became conscious of

their national unity as God's people, they were ever learning the lesson that man doth not live by bread alone. Jehovah had led them forth, by the hand of Moses and Aaron, from the house of bondage and cruelty in Egypt. Their leaders had told them that, if only they would obey the statutes of the Lord, He would surely bring them into a goodly land. But when they had settled down in Palestine, they did not remember the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Who had chosen them out as His people from among all the nations of antiquity. As the land was flowing with milk and honey, they imagined that they could continue to live in comfort and plenty without reference to their fathers' Providence. And so, throwing off their allegiance to the Lord God of Israel, they turned aside to worship the idols of the heathen. Yet, if they had forgotten God, He was not unmindful of His Covenant; and again and again He tried to cure His people of their neglect of Him. The Midianites came up against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till they "left no sustenance for Israel." A vast swarm of locusts suddenly appeared, and consumed all the verdure of the country-side. For three years "there was no rain in the land," till famine stalked abroad in the kingdom of Ahab. Such calamities were pregnant with a social warning to the Israelites. They were object-lessons, drawn by God's Finger upon the canvas of their national history. Through the stern logic of facts, they were being constantly reminded that their

prosperity did not depend upon seasonable weather, or upon a powerful army, or a fertile soil. And the cry of every prophet was an appeal to discern the meaning of the signs of the time. There is a sad monotony in the prophetic burden, uttered by seer after seer upon the rebellious race. If only the people would return to the Lord, if only they would set themselves to observe the statutes of His law, if only they would remember the Name of Him Who had led their fathers out from slavery, then God's Blessing would be upon His people, and the land would yield her increase, and all the nations should know that the Lord was God. In a word, the social welfare of the nation depended upon its response to God's Revelation of His Will.

Has this truth, then, ceased any longer to be true? Carlyle has said that "a nation's true Bible is its history." And certainly to all who believe in the story of the Old Testament, and in the prophetic Apocalypse of the New, history must always be a revelation. The people of England are God's people quite as certainly as the Jews, and in the fortunes of the Israelites we have a mirror in which we can see the interpretation of our own. As the Dean of Ely tells us, we have "had our Genesis and our Exodus, our Prophets and our Kings, our Chronicles, our Psalmists, and our Books of Wisdom." It is God Who has guided our progress ever since we became a nation, Who has inspired our poets and sages and reformers, and has written our statutes

from Magna Charta onward till to-day. Was not Carlyle himself the first of our modern prophets? Have we not had the locusts amongst us in those recurrent periods of commercial depression, which the older economists tried in vain to justify? Do we not suffer from a foeman's ravages, when a glut in the market results in a shortening of hands which deprives many of the means of subsistence? Are we not experiencing a chronic drought in the hunger of unemployment which always exists among the masses of our industrial population? The personal sin of individuals is undoubtedly the cause of many of their wants and troubles. But it is cant to deny the reality of our social sin. We, too, like the Israelites, have cast off our allegiance to our fathers' God. We have pinned our faith, not to the Revelation of His Providential Righteousness, but to the new methods of production and exchange and manufacture which have enabled us so largely to increase of late our national wealth. We have been told to bow down before the idol of competition, and to offer our worship to a calf of molten gold. And so we are suffering for our apostasy.

Yes, national welfare is still dependent upon the response of the people to the Will of God. It is not some fancied "niggardliness of Nature" which is to blame, nor the inevitable operation of "economic laws." It is we who have misused the gifts of Providence. There are labourers in England who are anxious to work, and yet cannot find any work to

do ; while there is not only a grievous lack of the food and raiment which their labour might produce, but the capital which might set them to work is also standing idle. In the face of such a situation, as Mr. Hobson justly says, it is not over-production from which we are suffering, but under-consumption ; which, being interpreted, means the poverty of the poor. The destitution and social misery in this rich land of ours is not due to individual sin alone, but to industrial disorder. We have allowed the economic revolution of the last century to go on its way, untempered by the ethical ideals of the Gospel. We have refused to listen to the burden of our prophets, and have dismissed their message as fanatical and absurd. We have not had the faith and courage to "seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness," and to trust utterly to the promise that "all other things" will then be added unto us. God knows that we have need of food and drink and raiment. But if, like "Gentiles" who do not know the meaning of His Name, our primary aim is, regardless of social duty, to acquire what we need for our own personal satisfaction, we shall find that many of us are not clothed as gorgeously as the lilies of the field, or fed as bountifully as the fowls of the air. It is in the Righteousness of God's Kingdom, and in it alone, that we can find a stable basis for our national economy.

Do we not gain, then, in the light of the Gospel of this Kingdom, a fresh insight into the meaning of the

familiar words, "Give us this day our daily bread?" We are praying that our food may come to us from God. As members of His Kingdom, we have to obtain our means of sustenance through a channel which is stamped with the Divine approval. Here we begin to perceive the reality of modern martyrdom. The industrial system of to-day is so complex, and the relations to others in which we are necessarily involved are so numerous and intricate, that it is not possible to trace in detail the source from which food and drink are coming to us. Nevertheless, the effort to do so—the attempt to insist on the righteousness of the methods which we have to countenance or adopt—is just the thing that is required of us, individually, as fellow-labourers in the Kingdom of God. Not only in the expenditure of our money, but also in the means by which it reaches us, we must observe the law of charity. If our wealth is being brought to us by falsehood and imposture, if we gain a living through the sweating or oppression of our fellows, or if our income be the product of some speculative gamble, we pray that all such wealth may be taken from us. If wages are being paid to us, while we neglect our responsibilities or shirk our appointed task, we pray that we may lose them. And, in the purchase of all our domestic requisites, we ask to be saved from the sin of tolerating wrong in the conditions under which they have been made. We are all responsible in a measure for the industrial situation. And, in a measure, also, we can all promote the

welfare of the labourers. It is the consuming public, ultimately, which is to blame. For the industrial order can be moralised only by resolute and concerted action based on faith. If we really believe in God's Kingship over all forms of getting and spending wealth, He will reveal to us our duty from point to point, and enable us to play the martyr's rôle. For a martyr is simply a witness. And we are called out, each one of us, by our use of the Paternoster, to bear testimony to a moral order which is in but not of the world. The work of the faithful Churchman of to-day is, not to escape from the world, but to overcome it by the victory of his faith.

Again, the language of this prayer indicates that our Lord intended His disciples to use it every day. We ask for "this day" as each arrives. Herein lies a manifestation of a particular duty. All food is the product of some kind of labour; and unless we are adding to the total sum, we are getting our bread without deserving it. Labour, whether of hand or head, is due from every member of society. The indissoluble relation between food and toil is one of the primary facts of civilization. And the truth has been formulated for all Christians in that Apostolic precept—which has been called the "labour law" of God's Kingdom—"This we commanded you, that, if any would not work, then neither should he eat." In the language of a modern prophet, "life without work is guilt." Here we need a change in our conventional estimate of a man's value, and our

popular standards of social prestige and utility. It is of the individual who does no useful labour that society ought to be ashamed. In whatever place they may be found, the men who though sound in mind and limb are receiving support without having ever given a genuine return in labour, are not fulfilling their duty to their fellow-men. Of course, under our present industrial *régime*, work is not always easy to procure: while there are many whose actual income of necessity is not due to their personal exertions. Yet the prayer to "give us this day" our daily food is but mockery on the lips of those who live solely for pleasure and luxurious ease, or in the mouth of the workman, lounging about the streets and public-houses, who sends his wife to a Mission for relief. As Carlyle forcibly told us, "the one monster upon earth" is the idle man. And our Father in Heaven has revealed to us that, for the welfare of the individual as well as for the permanence of the State, it is only through the sweat of our brow that He will give to us day by day our sustenance.

And again, with regard to the word "daily," there is some uncertainty as to the exact meaning of the Greek original. Bread "sufficient for subsistence" would perhaps be a more correct, if a more cumbersome, translation of the term. Yet, whatever be its exact rendering, its practical significance is clear. We ask God to give us a supply of food sufficient day by day for our physical necessities. What is enough for each of us we do not require to fix at

any special quantity. Indeed, the petition is a request that the settlement of the actual amount be left with Providence. None the less eloquent, however, is the language of the prayer. While it certainly does not reduce to a statutory level the total which we ought all to have, it does assert the limit beyond which none can go. Enough is not only "as good as a feast"—it is much better. And bread sufficient for subsistence is not the same thing as bread for waste or ostentation. Here, too, we need a change in our social methods. "Having food and raiment"—to quote again an Apostolic maxim—"let us be content." Can we wonder that the spectacle of a banquet of millionaires, at which a thousand pounds is spent on a single dress or delicacy, rouses the indignation of any patriot? Is not such wanton extravagance a menace to our social fabric far more threatening than the bomb of a deluded Anarchist? The limit of luxury, says a modern teacher, is its "practical power of ministration." And are not half the illnesses to which the human frame is subject due to excess, not only amongst the rich, but amongst the poor? It is true, no doubt, that a want of food is sometimes that which helps to drive the poor to drunkenness. Yet the fact that, on an average, the family of every working-man in England spends almost a shilling a day on liquor, represents quite as appalling a scandal as any to be found at a table in the West End. By His Prayer the Son of Man pleads with us for the poet's ideal

of "plain living and high thinking"—for more simplicity and contentment and sobriety. The growth of a practical materialism in our modern society is one of its greatest perils.

Lastly, we pray for all. The first word of the Paternoster declares the universality of its application; and in this petition—as in all that follow it—we cannot ask to receive anything ourselves without asking at the same time for the gift of similar blessings to other men. Not "Give me my bread," have we been taught to say, but "Give us ours." And the prayer is much more than the expression of a good-natured hope—a hope that, in truth, is born of a vain superstition. We do not merely ask that those who have none of the comforts and little of the necessities of life should be miraculously saved from a "death by starvation." This clause in the Paternoster gives utterance to a longing for a more just distribution of the means of life, for a more righteous system of production, for a more equitable method of national economy. It is a prayer for such an alteration in our industrial order as may enable all to obtain their livelihood in accordance with the Heavenly Father's Will. "Wage-labour," said the late Bishop of Durham, "appears to be an inevitable stage in the evolution of industry: but it is as little fitted to represent, finally and adequately, the relation of man to man in the production of wealth as in earlier days slavery or serfdom." And in so far as the present organisation of our industry is one

which not only prevents a man from reaping the full reward of his own labour, but also permits him to appropriate for himself the fruit of others' work, we pray God to establish a better in its place. Sooner or later our request will assuredly be granted. God is ever getting ready to carry out His Will. Are we, then, also prepared to meet Him?

"Man is more than constitutions : better rot beneath the sod,
Than be true to Church and State, while we're doubly false to
God.

Society claims our homage ; we grant it so, but then
Before man made us citizens, Great Nature made us men.

"He's true to God who's true to man : wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the All-beholding
Sun,

That wrong is also done to us ; and they are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their
race."

IV

THE CATHOLIC GOSPEL

"Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen."—ST. MATTHEW vi. 13.

THE doxology does not form part of the Paternoster itself. It is found only in one of the two Evangelists who have put the Lord's Prayer on record, and in its original form the Prayer ended with the preceding clause. But the doxology was added at a very early date, and soon found its way into the text of Scripture. It is far more than a graceful and sonorous appendix. It gives us the Rationale of Christian prayer, in that it sums up the essence of the Gospel. We do not say, "Thine shall be," nor "Thine ought to be," but "Thine is the Kingdom" here and now. Such is, indeed, the reason why we can use the Lord's Prayer at all: our prayer for the Advent of God's Kingdom is but for the progressive realisation of a present fact. Many of our liturgical collects end with a similar ascription. For Christian prayer is offered in the Name of Jesus Christ, which is the Name of Him Who, with the Father and the Holy

Ghost, "liveth and reigneth" now and evermore. And all such statements are a solemn reiteration of the characteristic truth of the New Testament—that the Kingdom of Heaven indeed has come. I desire now to turn your attention to that which has ever been the historic witness to the reality of God's Reign on earth.

It is obvious to any reader of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles that, when the Gospel of Jesus Christ first came before the world, it presented itself in the form of a visible society. Our Lord came to redeem, not men, but man. His method of redemption is not individual, but social: or rather, it is truly individual, because it is primarily social. He has founded a Kingdom; and His Kingdom is that in which every disciple finds his own life, by realising his spiritual union with others, in virtue of their mutual communion with their Invisible and Omnipresent King. The first act of the Apostles, after their Lord's Ascension, is to elect a successor into the traitor's place. The Organism is thus completed, and it awaits the Breath of Life. At Pentecost the Spirit of Truth is sent down upon the Bride of Christ, and the Church becomes alive and active. The first words of the chief Apostle, in answer to the request of the heart-stricken multitude, "What shall we do?" is a call to enter the Society—"Repent and be baptised, every one of you, . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The three thousand souls that were brought into the Church that day by the waters

of Holy Baptism, "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the Breaking of Bread and the prayers." The Sacrament of Holy Communion—called in early times most frequently the Eucharist and the Breaking of the Bread—was that by which their fellowship with one another was hallowed by a memorial Action. And, indeed, the sole form of Christian Worship, which is known to the New Testament, is the Breaking of the Lord's Bread. Baptism and the Supper of the Lord are thus seen to be unique institutions from the very first, because they were appointed and ordained by Christ Himself. And to the early Christians they were, indeed, the Sacraments of the Gospel. The laver of Regeneration proclaimed the fact that their Society was open to man as man: while, as they gathered round God's Board, they knew themselves to be members one of another, because they were all partakers of the One Bread from Heaven. In truth, the human race had begun to be conscious of its solidarity in the Second Adam, even Jesus Christ.

And from the Acts of the Apostles we learn a further characteristic of the *début* of the Christian Church upon the stage of history. "The multitude of them that believed," so writes their historian, "were together, and had all things common: and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any had need." And "great grace was upon them all," for they "were of one heart and soul; neither said any of them that

ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." The infant Church at Jerusalem has been described, in modern phraseology, as "a Socialist group." The Communism which she adopted, however, was in no sense a political or industrial organisation. It "consisted essentially in a point of view." Nor did it exclude the institution of private property. There are several indications that the disciples, even at the start, did not surrender the individual possession of their property, nor the moral responsibility which belongs to the personal tenure of goods and chattels. And their Communism—as Professor Peabody remarks—was "simply a glad, free, domestic relationship of generous aid and service, such as any modern Christian congregation might legitimately strive to imitate." In fact, the new spirit of fellowship in Jesus Christ was so powerful that it caused all the disciples, in addition to the establishment of a common fund, to regard their wealth as really belonging to the whole community. If they were Communists, their Communism was a spontaneous and voluntary experiment, universal not in fact, but only in idea. And it did not last for a generation. The Church at Jerusalem became so embarrassed, that she was soon in need of financial help from her daughter churches among the Gentiles. Nevertheless, the experiment which she attempted will always remain as an eloquent commentary upon her Gospel. It is not a mere coincidence of language that the

words "communist" and "communicant" are so similar in form. Several of the early Fathers of the Church dwell upon their mutual inter-dependence. For the infant Church did at least know herself to be in the Mind of Jesus Christ a "Holy Commune," where liberty was to be found in God's Righteousness, and equality in God's Fatherhood, and fraternity in God's Love. "This word Communion," says Mazzini, "is a sacred word. The Communion was a Symbol of the brotherhood of souls, and it rested with humanity to amplify and develop the truth hidden under it."

How, then, has humanity attempted to translate this Symbolism into concrete fact? The history of Christendom makes reply. And if we follow the fortunes of the Church for a few centuries, we shall find that she exhibits as eloquent a witness at a later period of her history. Before a generation had elapsed, she had plunged into the heart of ancient civilisation, borne onward by the fervid intensity of her conviction that she alone was able to regenerate the world. Rome was then its Mistress: and the area of the Imperial organisation, as was evident to the statesmanship of the Apostle to the Gentiles, was the ground prepared by Providence for the establishment of His spiritual Dominion. Despite the waves of persecution which broke upon the Church, she spread with marvellous rapidity throughout the provinces of the Empire, and reached the shores of Britain. The dream of our earliest

ecclesiastical statesman, however, was destined to be fulfilled in a manner different to that which he foresaw. The conversion of the Emperor Constantine marks the commencement of a change, which reached its climax when the Pope set the crown of Empire on the head of Charlemagne, or when John knelt before him to receive his kingdom as a Papal fief. For as the Church was brought more and more into contact with the powers that seemed to rule the world, her relation to the State was bound to alter. When, at last, the Roman Empire fell, the Church emerged from its ruins, and began to try and take its place. The Bishop of Rome, finding his see to be still the political metropolis of the West, conceived the splendid hope of winning the whole area of the disrupted Empire to acknowledge the supremacy of the Evangel, and himself as head of the Christian Church. Such an idea was brilliant in the extreme. And for a long time it was pursued with energy, devotion, and success. Country after country submitted to the Roman see, and the Church became an established institution throughout the Western world. Mediæval Christendom was the reply of history to the vision of the Apostle Paul.

Sooner or later, however, sin brings its retribution. The Church had been tempted, as her Lord had been tempted. And dazzled by the seductive glitter of the prospect, she had been unable to resist its fascination. In the person of the Bishop of Rome, she was carried by the Tempter to the summit of a

lofty mountain, and shown all the kingdoms of Europe at her feet, ready to acknowledge her Divine prerogative, if only she would consent to forget the truth that God's Kingdom is in, but not of the world. By degrees the Church abandoned the real secret of her power. Instead of moulding the temporal order by means of the spiritual, she utilised the former to establish the latter, until the recognition of the Papacy became the same thing as the recognition of the Kingdom of God. Yet, despite her fatal blemishes, the Church of the Middle Ages was emphatically the Preacher of a social Gospel. Unique has been her contribution to the progress of the European people. For if she had shaken hands with the world, she had imagined that in so doing she was bringing all the kingdoms of the world to acknowledge the reality of God's Dominion. The spiritual Empire of Rome, coterminous with the known boundaries of the earth, and claiming the allegiance of every sovereign, was an impressive and majestic fact. It is not difficult to imagine the picture which she presented to her contemporaries, as a vast hierarchical organisation, attracting the notice of every eye, and proclaiming by the very fact of her existence that human civilisation was under the Reign of God. Nor did the Mediæval Papacy fail for many a century to justify herself as the organ of social redemption. We are only beginning to realise the moral greatness of her work. It was the Christian Church who liberated the serf, purified the home, relieved the destitute,

tamed the warrior, and popularised the local government. In an age of regal despotism and barbaric cruelty, she alone stood out as the champion of the oppressed and disinherited, the friend of the poor, and the herald of a social democracy. And it was a love of money and of power, rather than any excrescences of dogma, that proved the ruin of the Mediæval Church. As the canker of Mammon ate its way—as she gradually abandoned her function as the true prophet of the people, and enforced her mistaken concept of authority for the sake of gold—the crisis of her history began. The Father's House was being made "a den of thieves."

Yes, the men of the Middle Ages were not allowed to forget that Christ's Gospel is the Gospel of His Kingdom. The populace knew that they belonged to a Divine Society, which was intended to link the nations into an Imperial unity, and to join man to man in the Personality of Jesus Christ. And they were enabled to realise the truth of such an Evangel by means of the Sacramental environment that lay around them. From birth to death, and even beyond it, they were surrounded by the organisation of the Catholic Church. The Sacrament of Holy Communion—generally called at that time the Mass—was the prominent feature of public life alike in town and in country; while the sense of social unity was ever being fostered by the common and universal Act of Christian Worship. However unlearned the worshipper might be, by his religion he could feel

something of the nearness of Heaven to him and to all the inhabitants of earth. For the Mass bore witness, not so much now to the Communism, but rather to the Humanitarianism of the Gospel. What is the meaning of those countless legends of the Middle Ages, in which Jesus Christ appears to the faithful now as a leper, now as a child, now as an outcast? They show, at least, that the Church found the real presence of her Lord in the suffering and weak and poor. The story of the Holy Grail may be taken as a vivid illustration of her sentiment. As you are aware, the Grail was the Cup out of which our Lord had partaken with His Apostles, when on the eve of His Death He had gathered them together in the Upper Room. It was brought to England—so the legend said—by Joseph of Arimathæa, and was shrined at Glastonbury, where it was an object of devout pilgrimage for many generations. Those who had charge of it were bound to be chaste in thought and deed; but, one of its custodians having broken the condition, San Greal disappeared. From that time it was the ambition of the knights of King Arthur's Table to go in search of it throughout the land.

Such a tale as this—a characteristic product of Mediævalism—reveals something of the meaning of the "Gospel Service" to our fellow-Churchmen in olden days. Arthur is the ideal King of Britain, and his Table is the Altar at which the Church of the Apostles meets for the Royal Banquet. The

quest of the Holy Grail, set before youth as the object of chivalrous endeavour, is the redemption of English society—the

“Shattering all evil customs everywhere”—

by the force of purity and truth of heart. Several of our modern poets in England have made use of the legend. But Lowell's “Vision of Sir Launcelot” is, perhaps, the most familiar to us. As the Knight leaves his castle, he sees a beggar at his gate, and flinging him a piece of gold he rides out in search of the Holy Grail. After months of fruitless labour, he returns on a Christmas Eve, his body weakened, his raiment torn, his provisions exhausted. As he nears his castle, again he espies on his path one of the outcasts of society; and now he shares with him his last crust of bread, and fetches him water from the wayside brook. Suddenly, on the spot where the beggar had stood, appears the Figure of the Son of Man. And He tells the Christian warrior the secret of success:—

“In many climes without avail
Thou’st spent thy life for the Holy Grail.
Behold, it is here! *This* Cup, which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for Me just now!
This crust is My Body that’s broken for thee!
This water My Blood that I shed on the Tree!
For the Holy Supper is kept indeed
In whatso we share with another’s need—
Not in what we give, but what we share—
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives himself with his alms, feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and Me.”

And now we must pass on to modern times. The Reformation, in one of its aspects, was undoubtedly a protest in favour of morality. Yet its ethical result was disappointing. It shattered the vision of social unity, which it is the prerogative of the Catholic religion of the Gospel to uphold and proclaim. It tore asunder, what God wills to be united, faith and works, tradition and conscience, authority and reason. For the ideals of the Reformation were in no sense social ideals: they were personal and individualistic. The only social principle which was asserted at the Reformation was the sentiment of nationality. When we in England finally threw off the domination of the Pope, we reaffirmed national independence as one of the permanent features of Catholicism. Not content, however, with independence as a nation, we proceeded to assert our independence as separate atoms. The Gospel became purely a matter of the relation between the individual soul and God, the Church herself faded into a Department of the State, and the Christian ideal was pictured as a "Pilgrim's Progress"—an escape from this world to the next—in solitary isolation. Rightly exulting in its escape from an ecclesiastical despotism, the soul forgot its Divine relation, alike to the Christian Brotherhood and to the social order of the day. Then, during the nineteenth century, scientific and political doctrinaires fanned the flame of Protestant Individualism by preaching a Gospel of universal warfare. "The struggle for existence" was

hailed as the decree of a beneficent Providence for the survival of the fittest, and *laissez faire* was the watch-word of progressive statesmanship. An era of sectarianism began. In their zeal to find something more satisfactory to their personal ideal of religion, men left the historic representative of Catholicism, without being able to perceive the social disaster which their policy involved. Schism is far more perilous than heresy. For sectarianism is not a mere dissent from certain doctrines of the Catholic Church: it is a determination to elevate some point of individual dissidence into a ground for actual separation from the Brotherhood, and thus to break the ultimate unity of the nation for the sake of a transient opinion. The ideals of the Nonconformists could not last for long. Sect after sect arose, only to subdivide again and yet again; until to-day there are three hundred denominations amongst those who profess and call themselves Christians in this country. England has long been dominated, alike in the political and the ecclesiastical world, by a false ideal of Liberty—false, only because it is partial. "Freedom" has been identified with sheer independence. Society has been forgotten in the individual, "each for himself" has been our watchword, and all regulative action, whether by Church or State, has been jealously regarded as "interference." And the result is saddening. The progress of social morality is no longer seen to be the characteristic end of the work of the Christian Church, and the study of ethics and

politics has been divorced from the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Yet there are many signs to-day of a coming change. The recent tendency towards Nonconformist Federation shows that "the Dissidence of Dissent" has ended, and that the centripetal forces in the ecclesiastical situation are more than balancing the centrifugal. Individualism has been slain more than once, in theory ; while a sane Socialism is becoming the creed of enlightened and progressive politics. Meanwhile, there has been a revival of religion within the National Church. Three gusts of God's Spirit have blown over her, and at the dawn of the twentieth century we inherit the inspiration of them all. The spirits of Wesley and Whitfield, of Keble and Pusey; of Maurice and Kingsley are telling upon us now. And the Low Church, the High Church, and the Broad Church coalesce in the modern movement. We have learnt that a personal grasp of the Cross lies at the root of all true religion. We have learnt that, if our worship is to be Scriptural, it must be Eucharistic ; and so we are restoring the Sacrament of Holy Communion to its rightful place as the Act of popular worship. And we are learning that, if our Sacraments are not merely "forms and ceremonies," they must be social facts ; so that those who believe in Baptism and the Lord's Supper, believe also in the spiritual Socialism embodied in the Sacramental ordinances of the Church, as well as in her vocation as a Prophet of national righteousness.

Ecclesiastical Sacramentalism is the skeleton, which social enthusiasm clothes with flesh and blood: for the Catholic Church, in history, is the organ of man's redemption. We cannot see anything of her future unless we understand the present, nor can we understand the present unless we know something of her past. And our National Establishment is no human club, no product of the Reformation, no fortuitous conglomerate of congregations. She is still, as she has always been, the Representative of God's Reign in England. It is a truism to say that every institution is the concrete embodiment of an idea: the material order of society is always a reflection of its spiritual state. But it is also a truism, to a believer in Jesus Christ, that the story of human progress is but a record of the steps, by which all the institutions of human society are coming to embody more fully the truths enshrined in the Divine Society and in the Catholic Sacraments of the Gospel. Though often "clothed in sackcloth," God's two prophetic witnesses are not dead. Again, in our generation, the Breath of Life is entering into them.

In the centre of the city of Florence there lies an open square surrounded by hotels and shops. And in one corner stands a glorious pile of architecture, surmounted by a graceful tower. It is the Town Hall of the city. And in the wall, above the arched entrance to the building, a marble slab was inserted many years ago, after the State of the Florentines had undergone a great reformation through the voice

of Savonarola. Upon that tablet were cut the words, "Jesus Christ, elected King of Florence, by the vote of the council and all the citizens!" When shall we copy their example, and elect the world's Redeemer as our King? Or rather, when shall we come to recognise that He is our King already? For we have but to acknowledge an existing fact. We have not to enthrone Jesus Christ—He is crowned now, and sitting at the Right Hand of God, the One supreme Potentate and Lord of all. We have only to believe in our King, to claim the protection of His Government, and to vindicate the width and scope of His universal Sovereignty. We have to understand the Gospel of His Ascension into Heaven, and to give our minds and hearts and wills to adoration. For it is the Church and her Worship which has always been the undying witness to God's Dominion. The last Act in the Drama of the Incarnation was the rising of the Son of Man from earth to Heaven. And, when the curtain fell, the Personality Which it hid from view was mounting to the Throne where now He sits a King for ever. There He presents Himself before the Father as His brethren's Advocate: while we, in our Eucharistic Oblation, represent as in a living drama the Sacrifice which He offered once for all upon the Cross. By the Action of Christian Worship we unite the adoration of Heaven and earth, and are brought into the Presence-Chamber of Him Who reigns—Him, to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, belong

the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory now and for evermore.

The Church of England is, I know, a most imperfect exponent of the ideal for which she stands. Yet her prospect is the brightest in all Christendom. There is that around us, in the Catholic organisation of our National Church, in the light of which we can pray and hope and labour. But we shall need God's gift of faith and hope and charity: and if charity be the greatest, faith comes first of all. It is only by faith that we shall ever be able to remove the mountains of difficulty that lie before us. And such faith must be a real belief in the Gospel of the world's redemption. Faith is not merely an intellectual assent to a proposition. It is a spiritual insight, a warm moral grasp of invisible realities, a prophetic trust in God and human nature, and in that Kingdom of God's Righteousness Which "shall have no end."

THE ADVENT DOCTRINES

I

DEATH

"Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."—
2 TIMOTHY i. 10.

THE season of Advent marks the commencement of the Christian year. And it opens with a message of hope. The characteristic note of the season is not one of sorrow, but of joy. Advent is not a minor Lent. The chord which it strikes upon a believer's ear is not a cry of introspective penitence, but a pæan of triumphant expectation. For the Coming of the Son of Man is, indeed, the foundation of all human hope. And round the theme of His Advent hangs a group of subjects, which are generally designated as "the last things." They are four in number—Death, Judgment, Hell, Heaven—and the term "Eschatological" is used to describe the doctrines which they represent. Such phraseology is, I think, somewhat unfortunate. In virtue of their very titles, "the last things" are popularly conceived to be altogether things of the future rather

than of the present. And it is because they are often felt to be somewhat remote from the interests of to-day, that the doctrines which they involve do not fill so large a place in the Christian consciousness as they deserve. During this season, therefore, I propose to consider these four Doctrines. They are not distant and unreal, but full of practical significance. And, as we study them, again and again we hear the note of expectation—joyful, solemn, and triumphant—ringing within our hearts in response to a living faith in the Advent of our Lord.

Now, the word "Death" is a relative term, to which the word "Life" is the correlative. And the Christian doctrine of Death is but a negation of the Christian doctrine of Life. Hence, before we can begin to appreciate its meaning, we have to find an answer to the question—What is meant by the word "Life" in the New Testament? The term is a favourite with the author of the fourth Gospel. It is rarely employed by the Synoptic Evangelists, except when they are recording an utterance by our Lord Himself. But the beloved disciple, in addition to the numerous sayings about life which he quotes from his Master's lips, uses it himself on more than one occasion. At the beginning of his account of the Advent of the Incarnate Word, he declares that "in Him was Life:" while he closes his narrative by saying that he might have written at much greater length, but that the signs which

he has put on record will be sufficient for the end he has had in view, viz. that his readers, "believing, might have life through His Name." Such, indeed, was popularly recognised to be the purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures, although an idolatrous worship of the letter had blinded the eyes of the Jewish interpreters of the Old Testament. "Ye search the Scriptures," said our Lord to those who were jealous of their reputation for a knowledge of Holy Writ; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me." And He ended His rebuke with a pathetic cry to the Bibliolaters—"Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life." Again and again the word recurs. Our Lord is described as the Bread of Life—the Living Bread Which came down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world. As the living Father has sent Him, and He liveth by the Father, even so the man that eateth Him shall live by Him. For He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father save by Him. Indeed, the fourth Gospel has justly been characterised as "the Gospel of Life," in that its author's mind seems to have been full of this distinctive idea about the Advent. And the same doctrine also is the theme of his first Epistle, which is a declaration about "the Word of Life" now manifested to the Christian Church: and in which he boldly states, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

Such passages as these—and they might easily be multiplied from the writings of others beside the Apostle John—make it obvious that the idea attached to the word “life” in the New Testament is different from that which belongs to it in ordinary conversation. And the Christian doctrine of life is, we believe, alone able to lift the dark shadow that overhangs that inevitable crisis of our being which we still call Death. Death is, indeed, a mystery. Yet, to the Christian, the King of Terrors has lost his sting. A “mystery” is not an inscrutable enigma. On the contrary, it is a secret the meaning of which has now at last been revealed. We who are Christians can contemplate the mystery of death without fear. In the power of the Cross we can look forward to it with a boundless and awesome hope. The valley of the shadow is now lit with a gleam of sunlight. Of course, the fact of death remains. But we who are Christians see it to be an intruder into the world of God. It is a thing unnatural, and contradictory, and out of place. If our whole being revolts against it, the revolt is seen to be justifiable. Death is, in the Apostle’s phrase, “an enemy,” a foe of God as well as man, an adversary to the realisation of His Reign. And so He sent His Only-Begotten Son to take away the sting of death, and to free us from the slavery of its terror. The Lord of Life Himself took flesh and blood, “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death—that is Satan; and so deliver them who, through

fear of death, were all their lifetime subject unto bondage." Hence, if we are to understand how it is that our Lord has really "abolished death," we must try to realise what is the essence of that life which He has brought within the reach of man. And—as the late Professor Drummond pointed out—we may well invoke the aid of the modern science of Biology. Several of its characteristic axioms shed a remarkable light upon the doctrines of the New Testament. The Kingdom of Nature is often used in Holy Writ as a parable of the Kingdom of God; and "science never corroborates a spiritual truth without illuminating it." The language of the Apostles and the words of our Lord Himself are made to glow again, when they are thrown into the crucible of modern biology and its scientific categories of thought.

Life, then, according to the biologists, is more than a mere existence. This earth of ours existed for many an æon before life made its first appearance in our midst. In its essence, life consists in a relation, a relation between the organism and its environment, a relation of correspondence and mutual adaptation. A thing which is alive is a thing which can vitally adjust itself to that which lies around it. It dies when it ceases to be able to correspond to its surroundings; while in so far as it is out of relation to any part of them, to that extent it cannot be said to be alive, but dead. Now, at each rung in the ladder of evolution, the organism that steps up into

view is able to connect itself with a larger portion of the totality of its environment. The kingdom of plants, the kingdom of animals, and the kingdom of men form an ascending scale, the members of each finding themselves cognisant of an ever widening circle of phenomena. The trees in the forest are unconscious of almost all that environs them. Soil and sky, light and air and rain—these are real to them. But to the music of the birds which flit among their branches they are insensible, torpid, dead. The bird, again, is in contact with a larger world. It can travel beyond the wood and across the seas, and it understands something of the meaning of trust and love and courage and parental responsibility. Yet it is dead to many a realm of human interest. As you stand beneath the branches, listening to its song, you feel that you are capable of "entering into life" more fully than plant or animal. You are conscious of many a world which is real to your race alone. You can transport yourself in thought to the last constellation which science has found in space, or to the earliest epoch of geological time. Vast tracts of the universe are open to you. And the varieties of human experience, as they come within your reach, are seen to be infinite in meaning. Life is a richer thing to you than to any other organism upon earth. The sway of death, absolute as it is over inorganic Nature, has gradually been weakened through the ages of organic evolution, till at last man was born and began to

enter into his kingdom. For the evolution of life is the evolution of consciousness: to live is not to be, but to know.

And now we come in sight of that which differentiates man from the lower creation. If modern science has disclosed the kinship which exists between animals and men, it has also enabled us to realise more vividly that which is the distinctive prerogative of the human race. People used to say that, if man be but a developed animal, he is either mortal like the brutes; or else, the animals are immortal. But biology lends no support to so rash an argumentative dilemma. Life, as we have seen, is an adaptation to environment. All organisms live just so long as their surroundings are favourable, and as they retain within themselves the power to correspond with the requirements of the conditions that encircle them. Biology has even given us a definition of Eternal Life. "Perfect correspondence," writes Mr. Herbert Spencer, "would be perfect life. Were there no changes in the environment but such as the organism had adapted changes to meet, and were the organism never to fail in the efficiency with which it met them, there would be eternal existence and eternal knowledge." Of course, Mr. Spencer is unable to find any such environment in what he calls "Nature:" nor can he find any organism possessed of such an infinite capacity of readjustment. Eternal life is to science a logical conceit. Nevertheless, the two terms which are required to complete the scientific definition are

simply God and man. It is acknowledged by any rational Theism that no part of our material surroundings is everlasting. That "the things which are seen are temporal," is an obvious truth. But there is a further truth: "the things which are not seen are eternal." If all the wealth of human civilisation and culture is but the passing fashion of God's world, the spiritual world is a permanent reality that has always lain behind it. Here and now we human beings have an Environment, Which is not temporal, but Eternal—even the God "in Whom we live and move and have our being." And we alone of all created things on earth are able to lay hold of Him. Men pray and worship. For we are the relatives of God. We can bring ourselves into contact with the spiritual realities that encircle us. In the totality of our present surroundings we are aware of Something—a Personal Being—That transcends all limitations of space and time. We have the power to adjust and readjust ourselves to the invisible forces that are at work about us and within. In a word, we can have fellowship with the Father of the Universe through the Spirit of His Incarnate Son. "And this is Life Eternal—to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." Knowledge of God is everlasting life. For He is the Heavenly Environment of Which man alone is conscious. Perfect correspondence is communion with Him through His Son. "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life."

Thus, we owe a debt, indeed, to modern science. It has illuminated the doctrine of the New Testament, and dug the grave of a popular superstition. Despite a hundred protests, Eternal Life is still frequently held to be an everlasting perpetuity, a prolonged monotony of existence, a barren continuance of mere being. Such an idea is hardly more than an empty platitude. No Gospel worthy of the name could present to us so colourless a hope. To live is not the same thing as to be. Life is far more than mere existence. In its essence, life is a form of consciousness. And it has been finely said that consciousness—which "is not yet born in stones—is sleeping in plants, is dreaming in animals, and is awakening in man." This awakening of self-consciousness is the birth of the human soul. The moment in organic evolution which witnessed the Genesis of a consciousness of God, witnessed also the creation of humanity: while the story of human progress is the story of man's growth in the knowledge of his God. The soul of man is, indeed, the crown of organic growth. When the faculty of knowing God had actually been evolved, something upon earth had now emerged into a new atmosphere, a loftier plane of existence, a richer field of being. Spirit met Spirit, God was recognised by His creation, the human race was born. Man, the child of Nature, is also the child of God. The Father saw His "Image" in a son.

Thus, to human beings, Life is a spiritual thing.

It is a moral condition—a state of the human soul. To know God is to be alive: to know Him not is death. Bodily existence by itself is mere animalism. In Apostolic language, “to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Do we not find, then, in the historic Advent of Jesus Christ, a doctrine of joyous hope? As the Nicene Creed reminds us, we profess to believe in “the Life of the world to come,” or (as it ought rather to be rendered), in “the Life of the Coming Age”—the Age, which was ushered in by the human Birth of Jesus Christ, and during “all the days” of which He has promised to be with us; till the consummation, when “the earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Sin has cut us off from God, and dimmed our vision of Heavenly things. But we who are Christians believe that He is now amongst us Who came to take away the sin of the world, and to open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. He came to restore us to moral fellowship with God, to break down the barrier that separates us from Him, and to quicken in us the capacity to lay hold of His Revelation of Himself. He came, as He has told us, that we “might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.” He that heareth His word, and believeth on Him that sent Him, “shall not come into condemnation,” but already is “passed from death to life.” Through faith in His Advent amongst us we can reach out beyond the limitations of time

and space ; and find that, to the Christian, there is no such thing as death. For we know, in the words of the beloved disciple, "that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is True ; and we are in Him that is True, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and Eternal Life."

And now we pass to a further point, which perhaps has occasioned a difficulty to some of you. If we claim that biological science provides a useful illustration of the Christian doctrine of life, we must be ready to consider one of its objections. As we have seen, life and death are not physical, but spiritual realities. They are ethical facts, facts of the present and not of the future. But what of that crisis of the bodily organism which is generally called Death? Theology asserts that it is "the wages of sin" ; but science only knows that man, like any other animal, is inevitably subject to physical decay and dissolution. What right have we to maintain that, if man had not sinned, he would not have had to pass through the valley of the shadow at all? In no sense can we claim biological warrant for so untenable an hypothesis. Death, to modern science, is simply the universal experience of every organism. It is true that some texts in the New Testament seem to regard the physical fact of dying, as well as the fact of moral death, as the penalty of human sin. But such an interpretation is far from certain ; while the Church is not concerned with any

other than the ethical fact. Her Gospel does no more than assert that, while moral degradation is the rightful outcome and desert of human sin, God's gift is that knowledge of Himself that is "the Life Everlasting." Nevertheless, sin has altered our experience of the physical crisis. It has brought God's curse behind it, and made our death-beds different from that which they might otherwise have been. Nor is such a truth merely a barren speculation. It is not a theory of what might have been, so much as an explanation of what actually has taken place. And it substantiates the Christian doctrine of the relation of the body to the soul.

For we who are Christians do not simply believe in the immortality of the soul—we believe in the Resurrection of the Body. Despite its descent from animal progenitors, the human body is altogether different from that of its biological ancestry. The birth of the soul reacted upon the physical organism of the body, which thus became the garb and vesture of human immortality. We human beings are not merely souls, imprisoned for awhile in tenements of clay, and waiting to

"Shuffle off this mortal coil."

Our bodies are the expression of our own selves. The material particles of which they are composed are constantly being changed, and it is our souls which direct their alteration. More and more is the

character of the man himself reflected in the features of his face. As Browning says,

“Of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form, and doth the body make.”

Hence, when man emerged from the lower creation, when a consciousness of God first dawned upon this planet, when the faculty of knowing Him evolved into being, the physical organism in which it had its birth would not remain such as it had been before. We know too little of the formative activities of a human soul to justify us in saying that it could not possibly have transfigured the human frame into a spiritual body. We know little indeed of the potentialities of spirit over matter. Yet we know enough of the soul's energy—enough of its actual capacity to mould its material environment—to believe it capable of at least transforming altogether our experience of death. And the Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives validity to our surmise. It shows us, in Dr. Westcott's words, “the change which would have passed over the earthly life of man, if sin had not brought in death.” However, the facts of history went otherwise. Sin did enter into the world, as the Apostle says, “and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” By his sin man blurred the rising vision of his God. He broke the chain that linked him to the Eternal, and lost the power of moral correspondence with God's Will. His spiritual energy was weakened, and so

his body remained a mortal frame. Satan, the king of death, gained an ascendancy over the human race. Nor has his dominion as yet come utterly to an end. The Lord of Life indeed has won His victory. He is "the First-Begotten of the dead." The Devil has long been cast down from the throne which he usurped: for Christ, not Satan, is King of all the earth. There remains, however, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed." The curse of death is a token that God's Triumph is not yet complete.

So, we are surely able to agree with the Apostolic theologian, and to believe that death—death as human nature now experiences it—is the penalty of human sin. For it is this that invests the Death of Jesus Christ with its transcendent meaning. The Cross is the climax of the world's tragedy. It was a body, a human body, that hung upon it; yet He, Whose soul was shrined within it, had never swerved from perfect conformity to His Father's Will. His physical death was voluntary. While it was, indeed, the penalty of human sin, it was a penalty which nothing but God's love for man made it needful for His Son to undergo. The Father loved Him, because He was willing to sacrifice His life. "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." He was paying no "debt of Nature," when He died upon the Cross. Rather, He was beginning to destroy the one thing that is unnatural in all the world. For the "sting" of human death is sin. And when He arose from the grave and clothed Himself again with

His human body, He did in truth "abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light." He revealed the true course of all Nature, as ever tending to the ultimate unity of God and man. He showed that the crisis of dying is but the entrance of the human spirit into a fuller life. Yet, of course, our resurrection cannot wholly be the same as His. His human frame, as that of the sinless Representative of our race, did not pass away to dust and earth and ashes. His tomb was empty on the Easter morn. For the body in which He rose, although it was no longer subject to the limitations of space and time, was the same as that which He had worn before. Our bodies, however—"the bodies of our humiliation"—are still subject to corruption and decay, and their physical atoms are resolved into the particles of the material universe. The body with which we shall be clothed is a spiritual body. It can have no physical continuity with that which we are wearing now. As human personality resides in the spiritual self, so our personal continuity is spiritual. In the words of "In Memoriam"—

"Eternal form will still divide
The eternal soul from all beside."

Our souls will find an embodiment, which more and more will reflect their essential nature. That spiritual clothing will be as different from our present frames as the flower is different from the seed. Yet it will be our body; for it will be the true expression of our very selves.

Does this doctrine, then, still seem to you remote from present interests? Assuredly it is of practical value to you now. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ are to be reproduced in each of His disciples, by virtue of their membership in the Christian Church. Man's welfare now depends upon his conformity to that Heavenly Environment which lies around him, and which is disclosed to him by the Sacraments of God's Evangel. Baptism and the Supper of the Lord stand in our midst as the outward and visible embodiment of inward and spiritual facts. Both of them speak to us of life and death. "Know ye not," asks the Apostle to the Gentiles, "that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His Death?" And, therefore, being "buried with Him in Baptism" we are also "risen with Him through faith" in God's mighty operation: so that—in the words of another Apostle—"even Baptism doth now save us, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ." Through the waters of Holy Baptism we entered into the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, that we might be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God," and unto the righteousness of faith in Him. And the Sacrament of the Altar bears even a more vivid testimony than the Sacrament of the Font. For the Feast of the Holy Table is not only a memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross, but also a means of fellowship with the glorified Humanity of Him Who is the Conqueror of Death. It is not a bare memento of a departed Friend, but our richest

act of participation in the new powers and forces that stream out upon humanity through the abiding Presence of the Son of Man. It is His Flesh and Blood—the essence of His Manhood—which you receive; while the Bread and the Wine alike are handed to you with the prayer that they may “preserve thy body,” as well as thy soul, unto everlasting life. Could there be a more eloquent witness to the Gospel of Eternal Life than is set forth before us, as we drink the Blood Which saves us from the death of sin, and feed on Him Who said that He would give His Flesh for the world’s vitality? It is, indeed, upon our moral correspondence with this Sacramental framework that our life depends. By the Cross we pass even now from death to life, as we lay down beneath it day by day the sins which so easily beset us; while by the Energy of the Resurrection we are brought again and again into fellowship with God. A death unto sin and a rising again unto righteousness is the spiritual drama which is to be re-enacted daily by the Christian. For our life—it is not a mere existence—“our life is hid with Christ in God.”

II

JUDGMENT

“Now is the Judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.”—ST. JOHN xii. 31.

IT has been said that the history of the human race can be summed up in three words—“Christ was coming, Christ came, Christ is coming!” The epigram is as true as it is striking. To all who believe in the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ, His Death and Resurrection form the pivot upon which the world’s history has turned. The story told by the Evangelists is the tragic crisis in the drama of human life. Yet that crisis, though unique in character, was not solitary. It was the goal and crown of all that went before it. The Light Which was now “coming into the world” was “the true Light Which lighteneth every man,” not only among Christian nations, but among the children of Abraham and all the other nations of antiquity. He had ever been coming throughout the religious twilight of the past. And now the day had dawned; while the future was to witness the mounting of the Sun of Righteousness

to the full zenith of His glory, and the spread of His illumination over all the earth. Thus, the doctrine of the Advent is the doctrine of an evolution in two stages, the fulfilment of the one marking the commencement of the fulfilment of the other. We who are Christians stand within the second epoch of the world's history. Not only do we believe that Christ has come, but we also believe that He will come again. And it is to the doctrine of His second Advent—His Coming in Judgment—that I desire to direct your attention.

For there is no doctrine of the Gospel which is more prominent in all the pages of the New Testament. The Coming of the Lord is constantly announced, in the Apostolic sermons and letters, as the ground of hope and comfort to the Christian Church. "The day of Christ," "the day of the Lord Jesus," "the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ"—such phrases are of common occurrence; and the expectation of the second Advent finds a place in the teaching of St. Peter as well as St. Paul, of St. James as well as of St. John. The last-mentioned, however, in virtue of the fact that he was probably the latest of the Apostles to fall asleep, was granted a fuller insight into its significance. History is, indeed, the Divine commentary upon its meaning. For there is no doubt that from the first the doctrine was misunderstood. Just as the Jews formed their own ideas about the Advent of the Messiah from an inadequate study of their Bible, and were therefore

unable to recognise Him when He came, so too the picture of His second Advent has not been framed aright by many of His disciples from the days of the Apostles onward. The fourth Evangelist, in the appendix to his record of the Gospel, alludes to a popular misconception. A saying had got abroad that he, the writer, "should not die." But the report was based upon a misinterpretation of the Master's reply to His Apostle, when St. Peter asked what the future held in store for St. John. Our Lord did not say "he shall not die," but had answered St. Peter's curiosity with the words, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" For long ago He had solemnly assured His disciples that amongst them were some who would "not taste of death, till they saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." And, before he fell asleep, the last survivor of the Apostles was able to realise that the words of his Master had proved true.

For not only did the Apostles believe in the reality of the second Advent: they expected that it would come at once. "The Lord is at hand"—is the universal burden of their teaching. It is on this earth of ours that the Judgment is to take place, and it is to begin immediately. Of course, it has been said that the Apostles were as mistaken as the rest of the disciples. History has shown them to have been labouring under a delusion, and their anticipations at least to have been premature. If the essential content of their hope in the Advent of

the Lord as Judge still remains to us, their disappointment should be a warning to the later ages of the Church. Such an interpretation of the doctrine is not uncommon. Yet surely it is unworthy of the Gospel. If it is quite true that the Evangel of the Kingdom must be preached to all nations before the end can come, it does not follow that the second Advent is postponed until that hour. From time to time a fantastic visionary has arisen in the Christian world to predict the imminence of the Lord's Return, and perhaps to announce the actual date. And the enthusiasm of his faith—a faith such as that of Immanuel Swedenborg or Edward Irving—however absurd and fanatical, is at least a protest against the conventional interpretation of our Christian Scriptures. For every protest recalls us to the New Testament, and to those words of Christ that can never pass away. He frequently spoke about His Advent. He not only exhorted His disciples to be ever on the watch for His Return, but He also warned them against the danger of being deceived by others or lulled to sleep by their own imaginings. When at the close of one of His parables about the Advent, an Apostle asked if its lesson was intended for them or for the world at large, He replied that the "faithful and wise" steward would dispense each portion of the meat of His doctrine in due season; but that if he began to say in his inmost heart, "my Lord delayeth His coming," he would find in the end that his position would be among "the hypocrites

and men of unbelief." For our Lord knew that a gross literalism of interpretation might destroy the force of His parabolic teaching, and that the metaphorical language which He employed might not be seen to be metaphor. He recognised the progressive character of all Revelation. After He had explained another of His Advent parables, He earnestly asked His disciples whether they "understood these things." And when they replied in the affirmative, He immediately went on to say that every scribe who is instructed in the mysteries of His Kingdom will bring out from the storehouse of the Gospel "things new" as well as old.

What, then, is the new platform upon which modern theology has taken its stand, and from which it helps us to interpret the things that are old? In a word, it is the standpoint of evolution. If modern science knows little or nothing of catastrophes, so theology is learning to be evolutionary rather than cataclysmal in its doctrines. The Coming of our Lord in Judgment is a manifold process. After all, the Apostles were not mistaken. They looked for the Christ to come at once, and most assuredly He came before the decease of the last survivor of the Apostolic band. He came in the Fall of Jerusalem. When the legionaries of Titus stormed and burnt the Holy City, the Judgment of the World had manifestly begun. Not only had the Wrath of God been poured forth upon an apostate Church and State, but the Kingship of His Son was revealed in power.

"Seated upon the Throne of His glory," He gathered before Him all the nations of the earth—all that had been, that were, and that would be—and passed the sentence of God upon them. He judged both the living and the dead. Great, indeed, was the tribulation of these days. The sun was darkened, and the moon did not give her light, and the stars began to fall from Heaven. The spiritual Luminary of the world—which had long been stationed above Jerusalem—was now totally eclipsed; so that men could no longer see in her even a reflected ray of her former glory, as the twinkling glimmer of God's ancient Firmament was blotted out in the blackness of an everlasting night. But, watching on the isle of Patmos, the aged seer could penetrate the darkness, and "see the Son of Man coming" with His Angels in the clouds of Heaven. A new foundation of human society had now been revealed, a new standard of national welfare, a new canon of personal worth. By it every earthly institution was now to be tested, together with every member of the human race. The old world had passed away; "the world to come" was coming.

Thus, the Apostles have not offered us a fallacious hope. When our Lord said to them, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified," the voice from Heaven that confirmed His utterance came for our sakes, that we might know that "now," indeed, "is the Judgment of the World." For the Prince of this world was cast out, as our Lord hung

upon the Cross. And when the Spirit of Truth came at Pentecost, the purpose of His Advent was to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. God's Judgment is a thing which is being acted out upon the stage of history. The second Advent is an historic evolution, in the course of which the Presence of the Son of Man is again and again laid bare to His disciples by the coming of a crisis. For the Greek word which is translated "Judgment" is exactly reproduced in the term "Crisis," and the great movements of human thought and action are but the manifold Comings of the Son of Man. As we look back across the centuries, we can surely see that He has often come in bygone generations. Nor has His Judgment fallen only upon the world, but also upon the Christian Church. He came—as the late Bishop of Durham pointed out to us—with Athanasius and Augustine, with Francis of Assisi, and Peter the Hermit, and Ignatius Loyola, with Colet and Galileo, with Luther and Calvin, with John Wesley, and William Wilberforce, and Charles Darwin. Such men were God's agents in the revolutions, which from time to time have overtaken various districts of the Christian world. New enthusiasms arose, new ideas entered the human intellect, old truths were quickened by a fresh interpretation. Of course, to quote the words of Dr. Westcott, these successive revolutions "were not at once recognised or understood. Christ moved among men, and they did not know Him. But meanwhile believers were

confessing their faith, as we do, that He should come again to judge the quick and the dead. And we now rejoice to acknowledge that their faith was not in vain, though it was confirmed in ways which had not been foreseen." There has been, indeed, many a Day of Judgment in the centuries that are past. And often, perhaps always, it has begun at the House of God. It was only those whose loins were girded, and whose lamps were trimmed and burning, who were able to go in with the Bridegroom when He came. At every crisis the virgins that were unwise have been left outside. When our Lord declared, "For Judgment am I come into the world, that they which see not might see, and they which see might be made blind," it was some of the most earnest and conscientious upholders of conventional religion who inquired, "Are we blind also?" And the reply of our Lord to the Pharisees reveals to us the subtle and terrible danger with which orthodox religion is always menaced by its complacency and dogmatic conceit. Nor are the warnings of the Gospel addressed only to the authorised teachers of the Christian Law. If the Master of God's Household, in giving to every man his proper work, commanded the porter especially to stand at the gate and watch, still the words remain, as God's order to all of His servants who desire to be ready at the Advent of His Son—"What I say unto you, I say unto all, 'Watch'!"

God's Judgment, then, is a thing of the present

and of the past, as well as of the future. And when we perceive the essence of this "eschatological" doctrine, the language of our Lord and His Apostles is immediately invested with a fuller meaning. Even the Apocalypse becomes intelligible ; it is seen to be a manifestation of the spiritual forces, which lie at the back of all history. The Angel flying through Heaven with the Everlasting Gospel to preach to all on earth has often cried, "Fear God and give glory to Him : for the hour of His Judgment is come !" Many a time has the Wrath of God and the Fury of the Lamb been made manifest, as His Angels have poured out the cup of His indignation upon everything that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. For the spiritual revolutions of the world are always accompanied by an outward and visible change, which at times takes the form of a national overthrow. If it were the eagles of Rome which had gathered round the carcase of the Jewish polity, the throne of the Cæsars itself was soon to be tottering to its fall. A military despotism, organised in support of luxury and wanton vice, a city filled with avarice and profligacy and superstition, the provinces taxed and drained for the parasites of the metropolis, and the starving rabble kept appeased by public doles and by the spectacle of degrading games—such a Babylon, drunk with human blood, had cumbered God's earth too long. And so the Goths and Huns swooped down upon the decaying corpse of ancient civilisation. Not without reason did Attila, the Hun,

describe himself as "the Scourge of God," when his barbaric warriors sacked the proud city that had dared to fancy herself the Mistress of the World. The downfall of the Roman Empire is indeed as striking an instance of God's Judgment as the destruction of Jerusalem herself. The pages of all history speak of "the Great Avenger" with an eloquence such that he who runs can read. Nor have we in modern times been left without a witness to the truth that the world's Master still returns to be its Judge. It was the Axe of God that fell upon the neck of the heir of St. Louis, when Church and State alike in France went down before the rage of a maddened people. A Royal court which was a den of debauchery, and a government corrupt and rotten to the core, found no support in the fact that they were nominally Christian. And a Church which had flattered the rich, and veneered with its own sanctions the iniquities of the social order of the day, could hardly mutter a platitude at the bursting of the storm. In the French Revolution, a festival of *l'Etre Supreme*, indeed, was celebrated, but with a ceremonial somewhat different from the "Mumbo-Jumbo" of Robespierre's idolatry.

Is not, then, the Christian doctrine of Judgment a most practical revelation? Its lesson is clearly taught in that parable, which is often described as the story of the sheep and the goats, but which deserves to be called "the Parable of Judgment." In it the Son of Man presents Himself to us, seated

upon the Throne of His glory, and before Him are gathered all the nations. He separates them as a shepherd divides his flock, setting the sheep upon His right hand and the goats upon His left; and when the latter ask with surprise the reason of the verdict of damnation that has been pronounced upon them, the Judge replies that, inasmuch as they had failed to do their duty as Christians to the least of these His brethren, they had proved faithless to the debt which they owed to Him. Here we have a revelation of God's Drama in Christian history. It is not possible to conceive the literal and actual occurrence of such a scene. By no effort of intellectual gymnastics can the vision be materialised in the terms of earthly space. Nor can I think that the attempt so to visualise the Day of Judgment is at all a profitable kind of spiritual exercise. The picture indeed is wholly symbolical. And it is not until we have ceased to set it in a sensuous frame that we can begin to realise the intensity of its significance and the grandeur of its moral lesson. Does every nation have its period of growth and decay? Can we cherish the hope that any modern Empire will last out to the end? Or is there some inevitable law—some cycle of natural evolution—by which every kingdom is bound to pass away? Here is the answer to such questionings. The fall of the Roman Empire and the ruin of the Monarchy in France were due to the fact that their social order was not grounded in the Mind of God. "Depart, ye

cursed," is the doom now set forth upon all nations which regard the Lord of Righteousness as "*Le Grand Peut-être*," and permit the rich to grind the faces of the poor. The God of Mercy will assuredly insist on having a merciful household for His children—a society which aims first and foremost at the welfare of its weakest members, a state whose heart is set upon feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, a people who reckon their wealth not in money but in men. Every nation in Christendom is thus being judged. If it really believes in God's Revelation of Himself, if it honestly labours for the realisation of human brotherhood, if it manfully tackles the problems of Imperial justice and social reconstruction in the light of God's ideal, then, and then only, will it receive that Kingdom which is the end of all earthly civilisation. But if it is content to feed itself on lies and imposture and oppression, if it sets the political pyramid upon its apex, and trusts in brute force rather than in righteousness and purity and truth, sooner or later it will find the God of Mercy to be a God of Judgment too. The excuse of ignorance will not be availing. For this is indeed "the Judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men prefer darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Listen to the eloquent lines which Russell Lowell penned, at the time when the future of the institution of slavery was testing the conscience of modern Christendom, and the hearts of men were put upon their trial by the cause of

universal emancipation. The words may well be quoted as a vivid description of the Christian idea of the Judgment—

“Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil
side ;
Some great Cause, God’s new Messiah, offering each the
bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the
right,
And the choice goes by for ever ’twixt the darkness and the
light.

“Backward look across the ages, and the beacon-moments see,
That, like peaks of some sunk island, jut up through oblivion’s
sea ;
Not an ear in court or market heard the low foreboding cry
Of those crises, God’s stern winnowers, from whose feet
earth’s chaff must fly :
Never shows the choice momentous, till the Judgment hath
passed by.

“Careless seems the great Avenger ; history’s pages but record
One long grapple in the darkness ’twixt old systems and the
Word.
Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the future ; and behind the dim
unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His
own.”

Do we not find, then, in this Advent doctrine, the inspiration of a mighty hope? The Mills of God grind slowly, but they grind small and true. When once we have really grasped the fact that His Judgment, infallible and absolute, is ever rolling forward

on this earth of ours, we gain courage at the sight, and we hail the promise that He will come again. There is much indeed to daunt us in the prospect of our land to-day. The signs of the times are red and lowering, and we may expect foul weather. The insolence of lust, the flouting of God's worship, the cynical pursuit of mammon and luxury and pleasure—such things fill our hearts with dismay and sorrow and reproach. Materialism is still found in every section of our society, drunkenness and unchastity make havoc of many an English home, commercial integrity appears to have gone out of fashion, labour and capital are more and more organised for battle, and the Church, overwhelmed by her own ritualistic "crisis," has forgotten how to emphasise the weightier matters of the law: trade, politics, and industry have been told that they stand outside the pale of spiritual religion, and they have taken the erring prophets gladly at their word. So, in the face of all our modern vice and covetousness and hypocrisy, the doctrine of the reality of Heaven's Judgment is truly a joyous Gospel. We can ask the God of Righteousness to come and shatter the lies and wrongs and shams that are around us and within our own hearts and minds. Many a man in our generation is uttering such a prayer. As our Lord foretold, the times have come indeed in which His disciples are desiring to "see one of the Days of the Son of Man;" and if as yet they see it not, perhaps it is nearer than they

commonly suppose. May it not be that it has already come—come to

“Shrivel the falsehood from the souls of men.”

Have I, then, robbed you of your belief in the Great Day of Judgment? Believe me, I have tried to confirm your faith. I have but attempted to help you to take hold of that spiritual truth, which is embodied for us in the imagery of our sacred writings, as of our sacred art. The picture, which was painted by the brush of the mediæval artist, requires to be set by us in a modern frame. Of course, there will be a termination of this present universe. The earthly life of humanity, as of the individual, must have an end. But it is quite profitless to speculate upon the material circumstances of the final scene. I do not ask you to believe in the erection of some visible Throne of Judgment, at the moment when the curtain is rung down upon this earthly stage. Yet I dare not, at my peril, refuse to expound as best I may the essential content of this doctrine of the Church. God's Throne of Judgment is already set. As Christians, we are always standing at the parting of the ways. When Emerson said, “The world is full of Judgment-Days,” he was not simply describing his own experience in Biblical phraseology—he was stating the essence of a Christian truth. Do not think for a moment that, in speaking about God's Judgment upon the World and upon the Church, I have forgotten that He is the Judge of individuals.

And if I seem to you to have neglected the personal aspect of this Advent doctrine, it is only because I believe that my welfare is not independent of the welfare of my Church and State. The fate of Christians is bound up with the destiny of the nation, to which they happen to belong. Our judgment as individual disciples has now begun. The future will merely unfold to us more and more clearly how searching a process it has always been. When the Apostle says that "it is appointed unto men once to die, and afterwards the Judgment," he means to warn and comfort us with the knowledge that, when we have departed this earthly life, we shall assuredly learn the truth of God's Assize. That which we call "Death" is indeed a crisis to us all. Yet that day will merely disclose to us more and more of the truth about our present selves. It will not change us: it will only show us up. For the future is the inevitable product of the present, while the present is but the outcome of the past. Just as the shout of "Fire!" on a ship at sea reveals in a moment the real character of the passengers and crew, so that courage and love and heroism appear, alongside of cowardice and brutality—so, too, God's Judgment of the individual soul is but a disclosure of its inmost state. It is a manifestation to it of the reality of things. If we, and the Apostles who have taught us, have to use the symbolism of a law-court, we must remember that it is a symbol. "We shall all stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ"—it is

profoundly true. And we shall then be enabled to perceive that we have always been standing in His Presence, and that His Judgment-Seat is also the Throne of Grace, at Which we have so often knelt before. Ah, our eyes are dim, our wills are irresolute and wavering, our hearts are cold and hard and worldly. "Enter not," then, O Lord—"enter not into Judgment with us Thy servants: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

III

HELL

"I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear : Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell ; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."—ST. LUKE xii. 5.

HELL is not a favourite topic in the modern pulpit. No one cares to speak about it ; and the few who attempt to explain the doctrine are generally likened by their hearers to the fools who "rush in where Angels fear to tread." Certainly the subject is one which bristles with difficulties. And, if a preacher had but to consult his fancied convenience, perhaps he would refuse to touch it. Nevertheless, although speech may not be silver, silence most assuredly cannot be golden. Many a man has been alienated from the Gospel by a misconception of the Christian doctrine of Hell. And if its interpretation is not even attempted, "the man in the church" is inclined to assume that it is one of which at heart the Ministry is really ashamed ; while "the man in the street" is glad to see that an ancient bogie of the priesthood has now been altogether detected and unmasked. The majority of those to whom I am

now speaking may feel perhaps that they ought to believe the doctrine, while at the same time their whole being is in revolt against it. It may be that some of you have had the courage frankly to throw it overboard. Nor are such among the meanest souls. For the protest against this doctrine has almost always been a moral protest, a rebellion of the human conscience, an appeal from fools' blunderings to the Eternal Truth. "If Hell be a Christian doctrine, then I don't want to believe in the Christian's God!" Such a cry, although often unuttered, is the widespread sentiment of our generation. Altogether do I sympathise with such an utterance. But we must ask ourselves what lies behind that monstrous caricature of the truth that goes by the title of "Eternal Torment." After all, every religion has believed in some kind of a Hell. And therefore, as there can be no smoke without fire, it will not be profitless for us to discover the teaching of the New Testament about that Fire which has thrown up such murky clouds of misrepresentation over all the world.

Let us turn to the Revised Version of the New Testament—which has done something to remove a preliminary obstacle. In the Authorized Version, the word "Hell" is used as the English equivalent for two terms in the Greek original. "Hades" and "Gehenna" alike are rendered by it. In the Revised Version, however, the word "Hell" has been retained only as a translation of the term "Gehenna." Now,

the word "Hades" signifies literally "the Invisible," "the Unseen World." The Greeks believed that the spirits of the departed went to a place underneath the earth, called "Hades," whence they were afterwards sent to the happy fields of Elysium, or to the gloomy realms of Tartarus. Jewish Eschatology did not differ greatly from that of the Greeks. With the exception of the Sadducees, all the schools of Jewish thought were agreed in holding that the human spirit continued to exist after death: while the Pharisees—who are the typical representatives of Jewish orthodoxy—believed also that the disembodied spirit would be clothed again with a body at the Resurrection. The place of its intermediate abode they called "Sheol," a term which was afterwards rendered by the Greek "Hades." The word "Paradise" conveyed to them almost the same idea as the Greek Elysium, the home of everlasting bliss. Heaven, to the pious Hebrew, was practically a synonym for God. And the orthodox, as a rule, conceived that in Hades, the intermediate abode of the departed, a separation began to be made between the just and the unjust, and "Abraham's Bosom" was the title they gave to that situation which was a foretaste of the bliss of Paradise. Thus, to the typical Jew, "Hades," "Abraham's Bosom," and "Paradise" seem to have represented an ascending scale in the progress of the just.

Turn, then, to some of those passages in the New Testament, where the word "Hell" has become

"Hades" in the Revised Version. In all the references to it which are made in the Apocalypse the new translation will be found, and also in several other passages. The parable of Dives and Lazarus will have recurred already to your memory. Both men died, and both are then found in the abode of the departed ; but between them a great gulf is fixed, the one being said to be in "Hades," and the other in "Abraham's bosom." Yet Dives is said to be not only in Hades, but also in torments. For the actual title, although it did not generally convey the happy ideas which were associated with the other phrase, meant no more than the home of the unseen dead. The story is set altogether in a Jewish framework, and even to the Jewish mind the gulf would be understood as a spiritual rather than a material separation. Again, when our Lord declared that Capernaum, which had been exalted to Heaven, would assuredly be "cast down into Hades," His words—if they are more than a rhetorical prophecy of oblivion—seem but to imply that the inhabitants of the favoured city would soon discover that their destiny was not altogether the Abraham's Bosom of which they had felt secure. And, on another occasion, our Lord made a striking use of the Jewish term. In a moment of joyous exultation, when for the first time human lips had been able to acknowledge the truth about Himself, He cried in triumph that He had found a Rock, and that "the gates of Hades" should not prevail against His Church. The

entrance into the unseen world would be no impassable barrier to membership in that Divine Kingdom, which could now be raised upon the rock of human personalities. Even after man had passed through the gates of death—whether before His Advent upon earth or after it, supported by hopes of an Abraham's Bosom or no—they still would find that His Church could reach them, and that her Gospel of Salvation could be theirs. He Himself was about to begin the work by passing through the portal. The time was now at hand, He had declared, when the dead should "hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." "Marvel not at this," He added; "for the hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice." For, after He had bowed His Head upon the Cross, we believe that "*He descended into Hell.*" The word in the Apostles' Creed, of course, is "Hades." When His human soul was parted from His human body, the Apostle Peter tells us that it received a quickening by the Spirit of God, through which He was enabled to go and preach the Gospel to the world of the departed. Its host of spiritual inhabitants were not yet in "Heaven." The Apostle says that those to whom our Lord preached were still "in prison," before they were liberated by His Advent in their midst. And when He spoke the word of comfort to the dying thief, He had described the abode where He would soon meet him by the word "Paradise;" not simply "Hades," and yet not "Heaven." For

"no man hath ascended up into Heaven, save He Who came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man Who *is in Heaven*."

Let us pass now to the word "Gehenna," and try to realise its associations to the Jewish mind. The term literally means "the land of Hinnom." "Hinnom" was the name given by the Jews to a gorge outside Jerusalem—the valley of Tophet—into which the refuse and offal of the metropolis was cast out. Dark volumes of smoke were continually rising from the burning rubbish, which was gradually consumed by the action of an almost subterranean fire. An equivalent illustration in modern times is provided, perhaps, by the slag-heap of a coal mine, which no deluge of rain seems to be able to extinguish; and which, although only appearing to smoke in the sunlight, can be seen at night to be furiously blazing, as the train whirls us through the mining districts in the Midlands and the North of England. The valley of Hinnom, then, with all its revolting features, represented to the orthodox Jew the type of punishment which would eventually befall the guilty. The Pharisees held that, when the just went to "Paradise," the unjust were cast into "the Fire of Gehenna." A few of them believed that, for those of the ungodly who were Israelites, the punishment of Hell would not last for ever. But by far the majority considered the fire to be everlasting for all the unjust alike. According to the orthodox doctrine of Judaism, the righteous would rise to life eternal, and the ungodly

would be punished with eternal torment. And the language which our Lord employed to express His own doctrine was that which was current among the Jewish Rabbis. The term "Gehenna" had a precise meaning. It signified the place of everlasting punishment. Nor does the word occur in the New Testament, save as a quotation from the lips of our Lord. His Apostles have hardly dared to employ it. If, in the second letter ascribed to St. Peter, the writer states that God "spared not the angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Hell," the Greek original is really "Tartarus:" besides, the Epistle is probably a spurious document. And, while the word occurs also in the Epistle of St. James, it is only as an echo of the Sermon on the Mount. The Christian doctrine of Hell is thus derived from the recorded utterances of our Lord Himself.

But although our Lord necessarily used the current language of Judaism, the Christian doctrine is different from that of Jewish orthodoxy. As to us who are Christians the doctrine of Judgment is not the same as it was to the pious Jew, so too there is a dissimilarity in our doctrine of Hell. I have already tried to show you that God's Judgment is a reality of the present hour; and that, in its essence, what we still call the great "Day" of Judgment is but the culmination of a spiritual process, which has ever been going on in history since the time when our Lord hung upon the Cross. In like manner, Hell is a thing of the present. It is, of course, in no sense

a place—it is a state, a condition of the human spirit, a deliberate and voluntary attitude of the human will. And if a human being desires to remain altogether in it, the culmination of his story is the destruction of his body and soul by Satan, the King of Hell. The language of our Lord is wholly spiritual. Just as we dare not materialise the Throne of Judgment, so we dare not materialise the Fires of Hell. Hell is as difficult to define as Heaven. But if Heaven be everywhere that God is, Hell is everywhere that Satan is. The New Testament does not define Hell—it describes it.

“For Heaven and Hell
Within the heart of every struggling mortal dwell.”

The words represent conditions of the human soul. What our Lord has done for us is simply to draw, by means of the symbolism of the Jewish Gehenna, a picture of the state to which human nature may be reduced. For our moral character, good and bad alike, is the product of our choice between the spiritual influences that encircle us. There are two atmospheres around us now—the Spirit of Heaven on the one hand, but also on the other the Breath of Hell. “The Friend of Man” has revealed to us the truth about the implacable Enemy of God and man alike. He has unmasked the great Deceiver of the nations of the earth. He has shown us that the ultimate source of evil lies, not within ourselves, but in a malignant and fiendish personality, who is

ever working for our ruin. And, in terms of graphic imagery, He has depicted for us the moral and spiritual condition which is the outcome of an absolute surrender of our wills to Satan. Therefore, He has told us to "fear him"—to beware of one who, if we allow it, can produce in the end so awful a result: "Yea, I say unto you, Fear him!"

But has not the power of Satan been broken? Yes: such is, indeed, the Gospel of the Advent of the Son of Man. His Cross brought about a revolution in the spiritual powers that be. Not only was a new life—"the Life of the Coming Age"—brought within the reach of man, but the ancient forces of evil were cast down. For when the disciples returned to our Lord and told Him joyfully that even the devils were subject unto them through His Name, He cried aloud, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven:" and then, turning round to His disciples, declared that He gave them "authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions; and nothing shall in anywise hurt you." The Advent of the Son of Man, completed as it was by the Act of His Ascension, has carried human nature to the Throne of God. It has, therefore, broken the back of the Satanic influences that are around us. But it has not abolished them. The spiritual powers of evil against which we wrestle—"the Principalities," "the Rulers of the Outer Darkness"—these, although gagged and fettered, have not yet been utterly destroyed. A deliberate and voluntary surrender to

them, if only for a moment, discloses to us our greatest peril. Anger—to take our Lord's instance in the Sermon on the Mount—anger against a person, is a thing in which human nature reflects the nature of the fiends. If the wrathful feeling is allowed to remain smothered in our hearts, we are already in danger. If it also finds vent in malicious vituperation, we have advanced still further on the way to destruction. But if the ill-will of hearts is such that, whenever we meet our brother, we spit out at him some hateful and contemptuous epithet, we are now “endangering ourselves unto the Gehenna of fire.” We have reached a most perilous stage in the path of moral degradation. In truth, we are becoming Fiendish. For the tongue, as St. James the Apostle says, although a “little member,” is, indeed, “the world of iniquity” among them all, “which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of Nature, and is set on fire by Hell.” Such language, borrowed from the lips of our Lord, is descriptive of moral facts, which are always vitally related to influences which are not of earth. The spiritual environments of good and evil, that lie around us here and now, have a power to envelop us more and more fully in the hereafter. But our Lord has won His victory for the human race. He has assured us of the final destruction of His Satanic foe. And so He has told us to be watchful, lest His enemy become our friend.

What, then, is the Christian doctrine of Hell?

If Hell be a spiritual atmosphere of humanity, can the permanence of such a thing within and around any individual be an essential element in the Gospel? Is not the dogma of an "everlasting retribution" wholly intolerable to us? This, I think, is the stumbling-block which we all feel to be the most difficult to remove. Yet perhaps it is not altogether impossible. The moral essence of the doctrine lies in the reality of human sin. If sin be really "our own fault," then it *ought* to be punished. The Heavenly Father is too good and wise to "spare the rod and spoil the child." All sin is punished, because Right is Right and Wrong is Wrong, and God is a Moral Being. Simply, and yet categorically, it is stated by the Apostle that, "whatever a man soweth, that shall he reap." Such a fact is recognised by all religions, and is the ethical justification of all our highest hopes. It is a fundamental truth of the universe, which every moral prophet has been enabled to perceive.

"Quisque suos patimur manes,"

is indeed one of the noblest intuitions of the pagan world; "each of us suffers in the hereafter that which we really deserve." And, in the Eternal Rightness of things, we ought to suffer it. The finest souls at all times could not wish it otherwise: for God, Who knows all things, must be the Absolutely Just and True. But is He not a God of Mercy also? Yes, this is the unique characteristic of His Nature, as it has been revealed to us in the Person of His

Son. The Spectacle of the Cross has revolutionised our idea of the Eternal Truth and Justice. It has shown to us who can believe in it, not that Justice is tempered with Mercy in the Eternal, but that Mercy and Justice are One in Him Who is the Truth. The God in Whom we believe is no fickle and capricious Deity, Who changes His mind from time to time, and Who sometimes hates, and sometimes loves, and sometimes is vaguely indifferent to the human race. Always, towards all men, He is the Father, a God of unalterable Holiness and Love. God's favour is not inconstant. The language of the Old Testament, and the parables of the New, are but human analogue. And it must be remembered, that in the case of the majority of our Lord's parables, His own interpretation of them to His earliest disciples has not reached us. It is only when we start from the New Testament as a whole—from the Father's Revelation of Himself in Him Who is "the Same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"—that we can begin to perceive the meaning of the change which the Vision of the Cross has produced in the spiritual horizon of humanity. Otherwise, the sun is still darkened, and the moon of the Church cannot give her light.

For the change is this. All human sin is still punished, both here and in the hereafter. But the Christian sees that, for him, the punishment is purely disciplinal. It is the evidence, not merely of Divine Anger, but of the Holiness of a Loving Father Who

wishes His children to be like Himself. Suffering is the necessary condition of all our progress in that Sanctification, which is the Will of God for His elect : for a vision of what we might have been brings with it an inevitable regret. Thus, the Cross ratifies the noble intuition of paganism, and ratifies it with a Gospel. What the Cross has abolished is, not the punishment, but the guilt of sin. For it is the sin itself, and not its retribution, which the Lamb of God has ever been blotting out. The "Remission" of sins in which we believe is not a letting off scot-free. Such an interpretation of the Atonement would be an insult to our moral sense. And it has in the past made the doctrine of the Cross to offend the souls of honest men. The Gospel of Forgiveness is the good news that, although we sin, God is ever ready to put away our sins, and to make it clear that He keeps no score against us. On our repentance He freely remits the debt. But it stabs our conscience again and yet again. And if Nature, as we put it, "always has her revenge," it is God's vengeance ; for the Lord most surely will and must repay. All our growth in the knowledge of God's Holiness is also a growth in the knowledge of our sin ; and the latter burns us, as the former makes us glad and free. Such suffering is not penal, but disciplinary. If we have still to call it "punishment," it is one which we ourselves would gladly impose—which we welcome more and more, as our vision of the Father's Love becomes more clear. St. Peter went out and "wept

bitterly," when the Lord turned to look upon him, after he had thrice denied that he knew the Lord at all. And St. Peter again "was grieved," when after His Resurrection the Lord thrice put to him the question, "Lovest thou Me?" But now his sorrow was not such as it had been during those hours and minutes that had intervened between his sin and his repentance. Throughout that awful time the fires of Purgatory had been kindled by the King of Hell; and they had raged around him, until they were extinguished by his flood of tears. And now the flame was rekindled by the King of Heaven. The memory of the past, though painful still, was becoming swallowed up in holy joy. If he was able to see more clearly the horror of his sin, he could also see, in the very question which had renewed his poignant sorrow, nothing but a further manifestation of God's Truth. "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Yes, the Romish doctrine of Purgatory—as our Article rightly says—is a "fond thing vainly invented." But the Protestant reaction went too far. To think that, at the moment of death, any man can begin to enjoy the fulness of the Beatific Vision, is an equally vain doctrine; and it is denied on every page of the New Testament. Such an idea would degrade God's Righteousness below the level of that of an earthly parent, and lower His Government beneath the standard of human law. It would altogether deprive us of the Vision of His Infinite

Holiness. Ah, let us not make God in our own image, and measure His Goodness by that which we think to be our own. Without holiness it will not be possible to find enjoyment in the Beatific Vision. And holiness demands an unceasing warfare against sin. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: whatever a man soweth, that shall he reap." But as soon as a man has brought himself down beneath the Cross, he has begun to "reap of the Spirit," and to find that the retribution he has still to undergo is no longer penal. The grief of the Apostle Peter was altogether different from that of Judas. Ever since he had left the Presence of his Master in the Upper Room, Judas had been in "the Outer Darkness," where is "the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." While the bitter tears of St. Peter were the product of the godly sorrow that worketh repentance, the sullen misery of remorse in Judas was the sorrow of the world that worketh death. Both alike were punished for their sin. But the Saint did not elect to remain in the Outer Darkness, and his penitence brought him back from woe to weal. Such is truly the constant crisis of the Spectacle of the Cross, the abiding Judgment of the human conscience, the perpetual alternatives before the Christian world. The Sign of the Son of Man has appeared in the Heavens over all the lands which profess to believe in His Evangel. Always standing before God's Judgment-Seat, we who are Christians can always find it to be the Throne of Grace. Nor can any

human being in Christendom be standing still. He is always moving—moving towards Heaven or Hell. Our spiritual condition is never stationary. Lewis Morris was right when he said, "We are ourselves our Heaven and Hell." For—

"Earth is Hell

Or Heaven ; and yet not only earth : but still
After the swift soul leaves the gates of death,
The pain grows deeper and less mixed—the joy
Purer and less alloyed : and we are damned
Or blest, as we have lived."

Does such a doctrine, then, relegate any member of the human race to ultimate perdition? No: not unless he desires to bring such a curse upon himself. Who ventures to confine within this planet the love of the Heavenly Father? Have we forgotten that the gates of the Unseen World are not to prevail against His Church? Can no echo of the Evangel of the Cross be heard beyond the grave? Are the keys of Hades and of death still in the hands of Satan? Did not our Lord begin the work of taking the Gospel to the dead? And is it conceivable that the departed members of His Church are idle? The Church Militant here on earth is surely not the only Church which organises missions to the heathen both at home and abroad. Her campaign of human redemption cannot be limited to the fields of earth. For we are told that it was to the spirits of those who had been overwhelmed by one of God's Judgments on this planet that our Lord went to announce in the Unseen World the Gospel of His Cross. Was

His mission foredoomed to failure? Could not the departed respond to His appeal? Is not His Church in Hades still carrying on His blessed work? If there is one sin that "hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come," other sins surely can be there forgiven. And, while "the world to come" is indeed an Age which has been coming upon earth ever since the Advent of the Son of Man, it has also been coming in Hades ever since He was there. Can we doubt for a moment that, if a man is willing to kneel before the Cross, he will find its Gospel to be availing in the hereafter as well as here? A dangerous doctrine! Is it so? Well, I am not careful to answer you. It can be dangerous only to those who do not wish to hallow the Eternal Name.

Have we been really trusting in the Everlasting Arms? For "the Lord's Terror" will swallow up that of Hell. Let us "fear Satan; yea, I say unto you, Fear him:" let us dread him, and hate him utterly, and shrink in horror from his approaches. But let us be wholly certain that Satan will not be able to destroy a man's body and soul in Hell, if our Lord can prevent it. Hell was not intended to be the last abode of any of God's children. As we have been told in the parable of the Judgment, the Kingdom of God is that which has been prepared for humanity from the foundation of the world. It is for the Devil and his angels that the Eternal Fire is ready. And if any human beings remain among

the fiends, it is because they altogether desire to be among them. While the Blessed are the "Blessed of the Father," the "cursed" are accursed of themselves. Such is the dread warning which our Lord has given us in His parable. He has shown to us the potentialities of human sin. He has revealed to us, not only the secret of all moral catastrophe, but the ultimate depth of degradation to which human nature can be reduced. He has told us that, if we continue to surrender ourselves to the evil spirits of pride and lust and envy, a time may come when we have finally lost control over ourselves, and are altogether at the mercy of our Satanic foe. In one man only can we say that such a spiritual condition seems, on earth at least, to have been fulfilled. Our Lord said of His betrayer, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born!" And He called him "the son of perdition." Nevertheless, if Judas be lost, it is because Heaven would be to him an agony far more exquisitely awful than Hell itself. It is God's Love that leaves him as he is.

This has been a long address. Yet, upon such a theme, brevity would have run too great a risk of misinterpretation. And I have still a word to add. Will Hell and its tenants continue to exist for ever? We cannot think that they will. Such a dualism would be as intolerable to our heads as to our hearts. Evil has come into being; but, if we are to believe that it will always be, the Oriental Sages made their long journey to Bethlehem in vain. He that was

born there to be King, has surely a Gospel beyond that of Zoroaster. The powers of good and evil, of light and darkness, of Christ and Satan are not equally eternal. In time evil came into being, and in time it will cease to be. In the end, and for ever, God will be "all in all." For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ "should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself—through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth or things in the Heavens." And "the Church, which is His Body," Militant here and Requiescant also in Hades, knows herself to be, even now, "the Fulness of Him Which filleth all in all."

IV

HEAVEN

“Our citizenship is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”—PHILIPPIANS iii. 20.

PHILIPPI was a Roman colony. It had been raised to colonial rank by Augustus, the successor of Julius Cæsar. And it is thus a type of the political transformation which, in the Apostolic age, was going on throughout the civilised world. The days of the Roman Republic were now ended—the Empire had begun to take its place. From the reign of Augustus dates the commencement of a policy which may justly be described as one of “Liberal Imperialism,” in that it aimed at making the provincials no longer subjects, but themselves members of the Roman Polity. The gift of citizenship, which had hitherto been jealously confined within the Italian territory, was now conferred on the inhabitants of the lands beyond the seas. Political privileges were freely granted, and any abuse of authority could now be checked by an appeal to Cæsar. Now, the Apostle Paul was a Roman citizen. Nor did he consider that a prelate of the Church should forget for a

moment his relation to his earthly fatherland. To him the marriage of politics and religion was no adulterous union: it was the divorce of the one from the other that was unholy. The Saint was indeed a sturdy patriot and politician. As he reasoned with the provincial governor at Cæsarea about the Judgment-Seat which is not of earth, Felix trembled at his doctrine; but refused to release the Apostle, as he hoped to receive a bribe for the gift of freedom. Then, in order that he might not endanger his own position at Rome by the complaints of the Jewish provincials, Felix left the prisoner in chains for his successor. On the arrival of Festus, St. Paul again defended himself, and denied the truth of the charge of wrong-doing against the law of the Jews or against Cæsar. And when Festus, willing like his predecessor to curry favour with the Jews, suggested to him that they should go up together to Jerusalem for the trial, the Apostle spoke out boldly, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews I have done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. I appeal unto Cæsar." A few days later, when Agrippa and his wife came to pay a state visit to Festus, Paul was permitted to speak for himself. The Jewish King was utterly scornful of the attempt to make him a "Christian." But he afterwards remarked to his colleague on the bench, that if the man had not foolishly insisted on taking his case to a higher tribunal, he might have been set at liberty then and there. In the course of earthly justice,

however, there was more at stake to the Apostle than a balance of expediency. The Empire stood for a reflex of the Reign of God. And a voice from Heaven within him had said that he was to bear witness to God in Rome.

It was from Rome that St. Paul wrote his letter to the Christians at Philippi. When visiting their city on a previous occasion he had exorcised an evil spirit of divination from a girl who had brought much gain to her masters by her diabolic gift of magic. Incensed at such interference with their traffic, the men brought St. Paul, and Silas his companion, before the local magistrates; who showed their sympathy with the populace by ordering the Apostles to be flogged and cast into prison. At midnight, however, the tremor of an earthquake shook the building, and the bolts of every door in the dungeon were dislocated and unloosed. Next morning an official message arrived, and the warder informed the Apostles that they were now at liberty. But St. Paul would not overlook such a miscarriage of justice. "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans: and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily: but let them come themselves and fetch us out." The guilty magistrates complied in a moment, and begged the Apostles with profuse apology to leave the prison, suggesting also that they should soon depart from the town. And now St. Paul is writing to the Christian Church in that locality where he had experienced such a scant

measure of justice. He himself is awaiting at Rome the result of his appeal to Cæsar. And he tells the Christians at Philippi that they have a higher ground of joy and satisfaction in the privileged position of "citizenship" than gratitude to an earthly sovereign. Let them be sure that their conduct was such as became the Gospel in which they believed: "for our citizenship is in Heaven."

Was the Apostle right, or was he wrong? Did he mean exactly what he said? Or ought he to have written, our citizenship will some day be in Heaven? If so, his message would not have been really a glad tidings to the people of Philippi. A few of the more aged among them might have taken some interest in his announcement. But by the large majority of the inhabitants his statement would probably have been altogether disregarded. They were citizens of Philippi—a town which stood at the confluence of East and West, whose title recalled a famous personality in the days of old, and whose inhabitants were just beginning to realise that they were now members of an Empire even more mighty than that of their illustrious founder. A vision of civic Imperialism was dawning upon them, and their minds were full of its privileges and responsibilities. Was there a Gospel for such men as these in the Apostolic message? Had the Apostle simply remarked at the close of his letter that the duties of citizenship ought not to be neglected by Christian people, perhaps we might look upon him as an

enthusiast for political morality, as a somewhat unorthodox prelate, as an ecclesiastic with a fad. But "in Heaven"—to speak of our membership in an earthly empire as illustrating our position as Christians, and enabling us to realise already what it is to be "in Heaven"—such an idea is too preposterous for our serious consideration! It may be, however, that it is we who are mistaken. The ideas that we associate with the word "Heaven" may have been derived from some other source than the New Testament. After all, we may find that the language of the Apostle is no enthusiastic hyperbole, but the essence of a Christian fact. Let us turn for information to our Scriptures.

To the pious Jew, as I have already said, the word "Heaven" was practically a synonym for God. If at times the term was used in ordinary conversation for the skies, or the atmosphere—as when our Lord asked His disciples to "behold the birds of the Heaven"—"the Heavens" were understood by the orthodox to be the abode of God, and of the spiritual influences which emanate from Him; while "the Kingdom of the Heavens"—in which the Messiah was to receive the throne—was exactly the same as the Kingdom of God. The two phrases are practically identical in meaning. And all the doctrines of Jewish eschatology hung around the Advent of the Christ and His Society, the Kingdom of the Son of Man. It was in the Kingdom of the Messiah that the just were to rise to the life eternal, while the

ungodly were to be cast out and punished with an everlasting torment. This Heavenly Constitution was to be set up in the Holy Land, and its centre was to be Jerusalem. The Advent of a New Jerusalem—the City of God—was to be the immediate result of the Advent of the Christ. Such was the hope which had sustained the Jews through many centuries of national misfortune. It was the civic Regeneration which seer and poet had foretold. In their captivity by the waters of Babylon they had sat down and wept, when they remembered the Hill of Sion. But Ezekiel, standing by the river Chebar, had bidden them take courage, and shown them a vision of the Temple on God's Hill. And when at last a remnant had returned to the Land of Promise, the voice of prophecy again was raised in expectation. "Thus saith the Lord," by His prophet Zechariah ; "I am returned unto Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem ; and Jerusalem shall be called a City of Truth, and the Mountain of the Lord of hosts a Holy Mountain."

And, let us remember, our Lord claimed to be the Fulfilment of all the eschatological anticipations of the Jews. Now, at last, the Kingdom of Heaven was really at hand. If among them that are born of women there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, still the Messiah declared that he that is least in the Heavenly Kingdom is greater than the last and greatest of the Hebrew prophets. In it His followers were to lay up their treasure ; for it

was a Heaven, "where neither moth nor rust could corrupt," and where "thieves could not break in and steal." They were not to think that He had come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: not one jot or tittle would pass away from the law, until both "Heaven and earth" had passed away. Blessed indeed were His disciples, in that they saw and heard that which many sages had longed both to see and hear. And it was the failure of the Jews to recognise the truth about Heaven which drew tears from the eyes of our Lord, as He rounded the brow of Mount Olivet, and gazed across the valley to His beloved Sion; where the Temple was being adorned and reconstructed by Herod's order with such magnificence as it had not known since the days of Solomon, and the Holy City lay before Him in the sunlight, a gleaming vision of white and gold. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Thou stonest the prophets that are sent to Thee!" When He paused at the entrance to the Temple and saw the sacred precincts leased by the ecclesiastical officials to tradesmen and money-changers and cattle-dealers—who had set up a market around God's Altar—it was His zeal for the Father's honour that made Him dash in upon that scene of desecration, hurl down the tables to the ground, and drive out the beasts and their warders, that the Church of God might no longer be a den of thieves. And when His disciples later on drew His attention to the grandeur of the rising fabric, He said that before long not one stone would be left

upon another; while on the evening of that day, after explaining at length His comment upon the future of the Temple, He repeated the prophecy that "Heaven" as well as earth should "pass away," adding with calm assurance that His words should remain for ever. As the hour drew on, He reiterated His majestic claim. At the Last Supper, on the recurrence of an old dispute about priority of station in His Kingdom, He assured His Apostles of their reward in that social transformation which their seers had led them to expect—"in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the Throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." For He had told His disciples already more than once that He was to ascend to God's Metropolis, just in order that all things spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled. And although they misunderstood His sayings at the time, and were afraid to ask Him, His meaning became more clear to them when after His Resurrection He spoke to them no longer in proverbs, but explained the things concerning His Kingdom. More and more did the truth break in upon them after the Advent of the Spirit, Who came to dwell within them ten days after their Lord and Master had Himself "ascended into the Heavens." And, to confirm the doctrine of our Christian citizenship, a door was opened to the last survivor of the Apostles. In his lonely exile he saw the Holy City coming down at last out of Heaven from God made

ready "as a Bride adorned for her husband." The four and twenty elders were now seated round about the Throne Which was set in Heaven. For "the Mystery of God"—His Apocalypse of Himself to the human race—was now completed. The first Heaven and the first earth had disappeared; but the words of Jesus Christ—those words which "are spirit and are life"—had not passed away. His Resurrection and Ascension had worked a revolution in the world. A "new Heaven and a new earth" had come.

Have we, then, failed, like the Jews, to recognise the truth about Heaven? In some measure, assuredly, their blunders have been repeated in the Christian Church. For our doctrine of Heaven is a more practical thing than Macaulay's New Zealander would gather from listening to the hymns of modern religionism. It has been said that a nation can be known by the character of its songs. And if the character of a Church is disclosed by its hymns, there is cause for misgiving about our own, seeing that in our public acts of praise materialism and sentimentality often quench the flow of devout and rational aspiration. It may be true that

"There is a happy land,
Far, far away."

But our visitor from the Antipodes would be sure to wonder why the worshippers were content to remain in England, and why they had not already

departed with all speed for that more favoured country. And if he heard another congregation singing, with apparent heartiness,

“’Tis weary waiting here,”

he would probably come to the conclusion that there was a good deal of cant in English hymnody. Nor would he be at all mistaken. Many of our popular hymns about Heaven are couched in language of a most hypocritical character. For we of the twentieth century are still finding it hard to escape from the mire of mediæval fancies. Perhaps we no longer localise Heaven. We all believe it to be a state—not a place. Nevertheless, the majority of Christian believers seem to assign to it a temporal commencement in the hereafter. Of course, such a conviction is based upon a Catholic truth, and it is the same truth as that which underlies the Romish doctrine of Purgatory. We have now altogether discarded the Protestant idea that, at the moment of death, any man is translated to the fulness of the Beatific Vision. But, in rejecting the figment of Protestantism, we are still apt to fall into a subtle reproduction of the Romish error, and to continue to materialise the truth in time. Nowadays people speak much about the so-called “Intermediate State” of the Departed. They feel rightly that death does not change us, but only the visible conditions of our environment, and that we still remain just that which we were before. And they go on to speculate about

the duration of the Intermediate State, and often say that it ends with the Day of Judgment; which is then followed by Heaven and Hell. Now, while there may be spiritual truths which underlie such speculations, surely it is as unwise as it is profitless to build an edifice of eschatological doctrine upon them. Just as we dare not localise the Throne of Judgment, so we dare not temporalise the Day. At no special moment in time can we say that the spirits of men receive their Resurrection bodies—the spiritual clothing is gradually donned by the disembodied soul. There is really no “Intermediate” State, because there is no temporal point at which it ends. For infinite must be the possibilities of human progress towards the Vision of God. Perhaps it would be well if all who concerned themselves with such eschatological speculations, were to remember that long ago one of the Apostles saw an Angel lift his right hand to Heaven, and heard an oath sworn by the Name of Him Who liveth for ever and ever, that for all Christian people there “should be time no longer.”

No, the New Testament does not encourage such barren imaginings. When the disciples asked our Lord about the hereafter, His custom was to turn their thoughts back upon themselves and upon the things of the present hour. The Christian doctrine of Heaven is a revelation for to-day, and indeed is the essence of our Lord's Gospel. For all the doctrines of His Evangel, like the eschatological

speculations of the Jews, hang around the historic Advent of the Son of Man. They are but the "mysteries" of His Kingdom—the Kingdom of Heaven—the spiritual truths, which the multitude could only receive in parables, but which our Lord still explains in private to those of His disciples who really wish to understand them. His Heavenly Jerusalem has been coming ever more and more fully upon this earth of ours, just in so far as men have seen it to be a "pearl of great price," and have gone and sold all that they had in order to purchase it. It is no distant city, but a realm of spiritual influence around us here and now, inspired by the unchanging Personality of Jesus Christ. For when we say, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, that our Lord has "*ascended into Heaven*," we do not mean to assert that He has been spatially removed from earth. His Presence was withdrawn from the outward eye of man—from the conditions of space, as of time, under which our present bodies live—in order that it might become no longer local. He is now present everywhere, and in every one who will give Him entrance. Wordsworth says that

"Heaven lies around us in our infancy."

And he goes on to describe how, as the boy grows older, he gradually leaves the vision behind him, until

"At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

Yet such a loss of spiritual eyesight is no incurable affliction in any spot which has become a Holy Land by the Advent of the Gospel. After all, the daylight is the same as the light of dawn; and it becomes more and more "common," only in order that it may be more useful as the day rolls on. It is always possible to be converted, and to become as a little child. Indeed, unless we are ready to receive the Kingdom in a spirit of childlike humility and trust in the Goodness of our Heavenly Father, and with a real desire to return to the simplicity of our infant days, we shall in no wise enter into the fulness of our present bliss. At the hearts of all of us, to-day and always, God's Messiah stands at the door and knocks.

What, then, is the Christian doctrine of Heaven? In a word, it is a revelation of God's Humanity, of the new powers and forces which He has brought within the reach of man, and of the Divine order of society that is gradually being realised on earth. It is a disclosure, not only of the Name by which God has spoken to us in these latter days, but of the union which He has established between Himself and us. For Grace, as well as Truth, has come. The Christian Heaven is not simply a purified and improved edition of the Greek Elysium, or any such fantasy—cold, drear, and listless—of the theological imagination. The Heavenly Jerusalem, of which the Old and the New Testament alike are constantly speaking, is the Apocalypse of a world of moral

harmony and progress, which has long been slowly evolving in the midst of human society. It puts before us a picture of a spiritual City, the Temple of redeemed humanity, whose Architect is the living God. For Heaven and earth are now indissolubly united in the Ascended Humanity of Jesus Christ. Human nature has itself been exalted to the Throne of God, since the human race has found its true Husband in the Marriage of the Lamb. He is not the second Abraham, but the second Adam, in Whom every human being can see his Archetype. And the story of God's City is but the gradual epiphany of His Advent throughout Christendom. The New Jerusalem is no spectral phantom, but a vision of the abiding Polity, Which gives all their meaning to the transitory shapes and forms of human civilisation. It has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine upon it; for "the Glory of God" is that which lightens it, and "the Lamp thereof is the Lamb." And into it the glory and honour of all the world's nations are being brought.

Is it not, then, a practical revelation? Contemplate the scene presented by our modern Babylon. By night the streets of London, and of many another town in England, are an awful spectacle. Yet by day also the picture of our metropolis is almost as terrible to the spectator. The fierceness of the industrial struggle, the unblushing cynicism of the world of business, the millionaires at the top and the thousands of paupers at the bottom, the idols

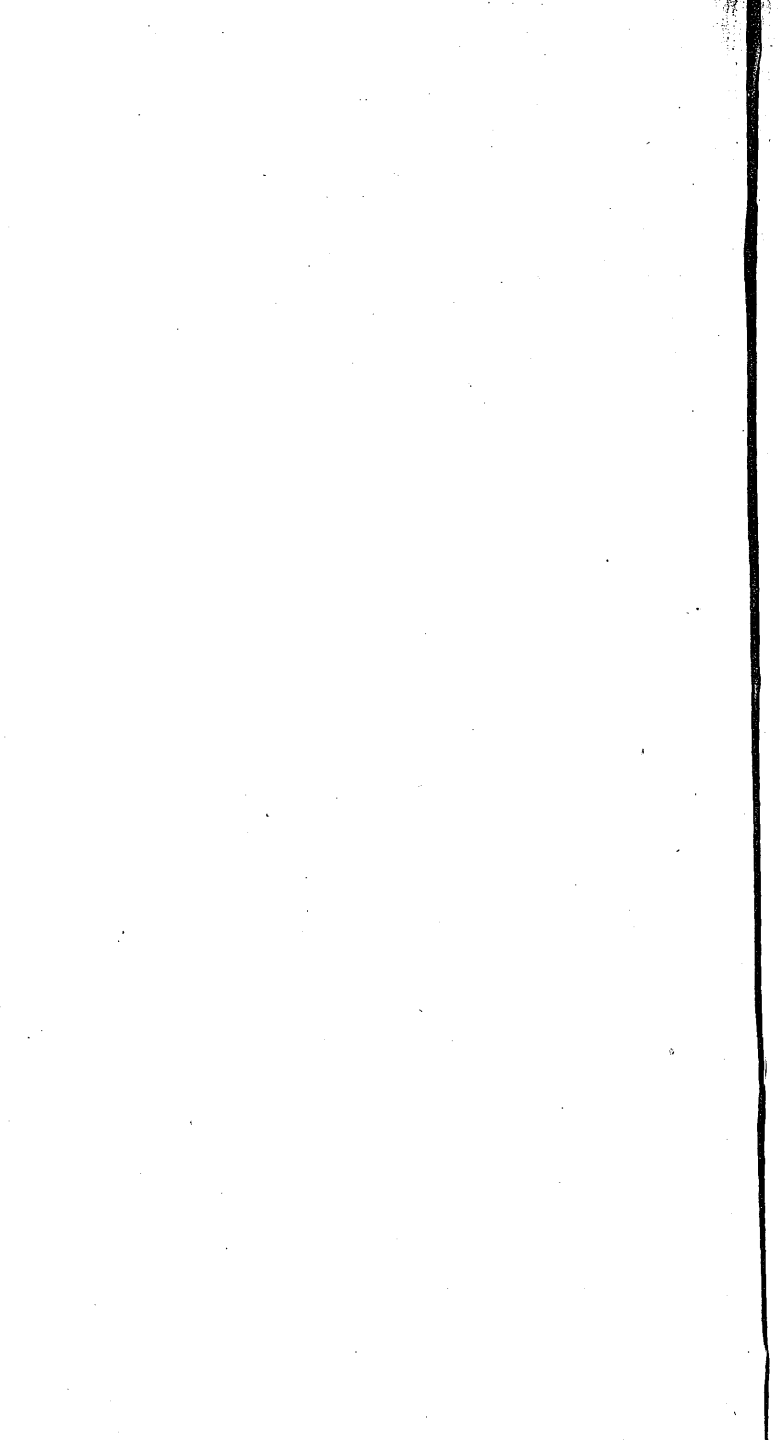
of selfishness and pleasure enthroned in the hearts of rich and poor alike, the worship of rank and money, and the slums of East and West and North and South, with their squalid accompaniment of misery and want—can such a vision, as you try to realise its meaning, bring to you any peace of mind? If you believe in a God at all, if you think that “Father” is the name which best expresses His relation to humanity, if you conceive of Him as the Personification of Truth and Love and Justice, you must be haunted at times with a sense of dread and horror as to the future of our Babylon. Of course, in the stress of your labour in office or factory or workshop, you have little time to think of anything except the work on hand. But in your calmer moments, when your heart is free, and your sight is steady, and your brain is clear, you must feel that, if only the Great Architect once had His way, He would build a far nobler city than our present metropolis. Yes! and He has been trying to rebuild it for many a day. But He cannot do it without your co-operation. It is the privilege of your citizenship in the Heavenly Jerusalem that you can help Him in His task. Right in the midst of the stir and hum and bustle of the City, you can bear your witness to the reality of God’s Metropolis. Every human being is thus knit up into God’s scheme for the universe, and finds in it his personal dignity and the real meaning of his daily work. If your mind is once fired by the truth that your citizenship is even

now in Heaven, does not your whole being rise to welcome it? Is it nothing to know that you can be an ally of the Eternal Purpose of the ages? Can there be any nobler outcome for all your activity than to make our country a Holy Land and each of its towns a City of God? Is not this the only reason why you are now alive at all? And does not the assurance that all such toil and labour will be continued in the hereafter answer to the truest longings of your soul?

More than two thousand years have now elapsed since the greatest of the Greek philosophers sketched the outline of a polity which embodied his ideal of the truth. And when one day a disciple suggested a doubt as to whether such a society could ever be found on earth, he replied that certainly he was afraid, unless some Divine event befel, that his Republic was but a dream; yet he felt sure that its original was somewhere stored in Heaven. We who are Christians know that Socrates was right in his conjecture. Had he lived but a few generations later, he might have seen the Heavenly Commonwealth of his fancy descending from on high. For the "Divine Event," after which he dimly yearned, was the Advent of the Only-Begotten Son of God. Other men, too, have had dreams and visions of an ideal state. And all such aspirations, from the Republic of Plato to the Earthly Paradise of William Morris and the Utopias of modern Socialism, have for nearly two thousand years been finding their

progressive realisation in the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. For the Christ has come! We do not "look for another"! And blessed is he who does not stumble at His Revelation! But if we who are His disciples are to see its grandeur, we must have our dreams and visions of the Holy Mountain, the City of God's Truth. We must lift our eyes to Heaven, just in order that we may redeem the earth. We must be able to see, as we draw near to God's Altar, week by week, in the Act of Christian Worship, that we have not come to a Mountain which might not be touched, and which burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, as the spot where the new Covenant of God with man is ratified; but that indeed it is true that now we are "come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, and to the general assembly and Church of the first-born who are enrolled in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of a New Testament, and to the Blood of Sprinkling," Which is fraught with a far nobler message than that of a murdered brother. And therefore we must simply believe the Gospel. It is to that alone that I appeal.

APPENDICES



I

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE HEXATEUCH

THE word "Hexateuch" has now taken the place of "Pentateuch" as a description of the earlier portion of the Old Testament. For the first six "books" are classed together, and form a literary whole, since the main documents out of which Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers have been compiled, are also found in the book of Joshua. The following represent the various stages by which, according to the generality of the Higher Critics, the Hexateuch has been gradually evolved :—

- (1) A prophetic narrative, "J," of Hebrew history and traditions, based on written as well as oral information, was drawn up about 850 B.C. in the Southern Kingdom.
- (2) A similar record, "E," was composed in the Kingdom of Israel about a century later, 750 B.C.
- (3) This second narrative was carried into Judah, perhaps at the time of the fall of the Northern Kingdom, 722 B.C. And the pair were fused together by a redactor, "JE," at some date between 700 and 650 B.C.
- (4) In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, 621 B.C., "the Book of the Law" was found in the Temple (cf. 2 Kings xxii.). This was the present Book of Deuteronomy, "D," save for its preface and appendix, which were added later. It was probably

written not long before its discovery. The author has used the laws and narrative of JE, but recast them in the light of the characteristic doctrine of the prophets.

- (5) The Law of Holiness (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.), "H," was drawn up during the earlier years of the Captivity, soon after 600 B.C. It seems to be also based on the legislation of JE. Akin in many ways to the Book of Ezekiel, it marks the beginning of the sacerdotal element in the Hexateuch.
- (6) About the close of the exile another narrative was composed, "P," by a member of the priesthood, who probably incorporated H into his treatise. It is a complete record of the institutions of the Theocracy, and was promulgated about 500 B.C. The prophetic documents, J and E, contain (a) the Decalogue (Ex. xx. 1-17: except verse 11, which has been added from P); (b) the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx. 22-xxiii. 33), and (c) the so-called second Decalogue (Ex. xxxiv. 11-26). All the rest of the legislation in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, belongs to P.
- (7) Lastly, after the return of the Jews from captivity JE, D, and P were welded together. The sacerdotal narrative was taken as the groundwork of the final compilation, which may be dated between 450 and 400 B.C.

Thus, the Hexateuch has taken several centuries to reach its present form. It contains four main documentary strata, out of which the Priest's Code may be subtracted and read consecutively as an intelligible whole. In the introductory chapters of Genesis only two documents appear, P and J, the Elohist sections of the prophetic narrative not occurring until later in the Book. The first chapter, together with three and a half verses of the second,

belongs to P; the second and third chapters are taken from J. Thus, while the first represents the product of a mature theology, the second and third record the earliest speculations of the Hebrew faith. It may be of interest to append the critical analysis of these prefatory chapters, as given by Professor Driver, in his "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament":—

"P"—i. 1-ii. 4^a; v. 1-28, 30-32; vi. 9-22; vii. 6, 11, 13-16^a, 18-21, 24; viii. 1-2^a, 3^b-5, 13^a, 14-19; ix. 1-17, 28, 29; x. 1-7, 20, 22, 23, 31, 32; xi. 10-27, 31, and 32.

"J"—ii. 4^b-iv. 26; v. 29; vi. 1-8; vii. 1-5, 7-10, 12, 16^b, 17, 22, 23; viii. 2^b-3^a, 6-12, 13^b, 20-22; ix. 18-27; x. 8-19, 21, 24-30; xi. 1-9, 28-30.

II

NATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL

SOME years ago a book called "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" attained a remarkable popularity almost in a day. More than 100,000 copies were sold in England alone, and the name of Henry Drummond soon became familiar in America also and on the European continent. The attraction of the book, apart from the brilliance of its style, lay in the fact that it was an attempt by a man of scientific culture to demonstrate the truth of religion. Is the Supernatural Natural? or is it Unnatural?—was the question which Drummond set himself to discuss. His book was not intended to be "a mere freshening of the theological atmosphere," with a series of parables drawn from modern biology. He says that he began with science, and "ran up the natural law as far as it would go," and then found that a Biblical doctrine had burst into view. He claimed that such a method alone was scientific; and by its aid he looked forward to the advent of a rational theology, through which the Spiritual World would at last be brought beneath the sceptre of Natural Law. His mode of argument, however, was soon discovered to be wholly unsound. The popularity of his book has been really ephemeral. Its value lay, not in its logical method, but in its recognition of an ultimate unity in Nature and the

Supernatural. It is vain, as Drummond saw, to continue the process of territorial reconciliation between the combatants. The compromise of a division of area does but patch up a hollow truce. Unification alone can end the warfare. And the fusion of the Supernatural with that which is truly Natural is an achievement proper to a rational theology.

But the tactics which have to be adopted by the modern Apologist are not those of Professor Drummond. Over the ultimate settlement it is a Catholic flag that will be seen waving. Indeed the struggle has already passed its crisis, since the disciples of Nature are no longer worshipping at the shrine of matter; while the disciples of the Supernatural are understanding more fully the bearing of their faith in the Word of Divine Reason. Drummond held that the end would be reached by an expansion of the authority of Natural law. Rightly regarding the idea of Law as one of the most fruitful contributions of modern science to intellectual progress, he dreamt of the day when all the phenomena of the human spirit would yield to its dominion. Just as the gift of science to Religion is the demonstration of the naturalness of the Supernatural, so "the gift of Religion to Science," he said, "is the demonstration of the supernaturalness of the Natural. Thus, as the Supernatural becomes slowly Natural, so will also the Natural become slowly Supernatural, until in the impersonal authority of law men recognise everywhere the Authority of God." But Drummond's vision of the coming synthesis was altogether distorted, because it was seen by him through the haze of a wrong perspective. As one of his critics acutely remarked, he "ought to have reversed the adjectives" in the title of his book. For the Religion of Nature, of which it professed to be the harbinger, would have been founded on shifting sand, and been entirely unable to weather the storm of intellectual change and

movement. Drummond was a deeply religious man, but not a theologian. He had little grasp of the dogmatic content of Revelation. And he never really asked himself what he meant by "Natural Law." For the idea which has to be expanded is not the idea of law, but the idea of Nature.

What meaning, then, are we to attach to the word "Nature"? In the prophetic utterance, by which Bacon became the founder of the inductive method—*Natura, nisi parendo, non vincitur*—the term meant the world of material phenomena. It was the totality of those things of which we are cognisant through the channels of sensation. And this is a sense in which the word is frequently employed to-day. To the typical scientist "Nature" is the physical universe, a compound of matter and energy; while his "psychological climate" is apt to lead him on at times to identify his "Nature" with reality. But the chasm across which he has stepped—the gap between physical fact and positive being—is not to be bridged so easily. In itself the world of sensuous things does but convey to the individual a series of heterogeneous stimulations, devoid of all coherence or unity. His senses do but receive a multitude of pin-pricks. The impression received by the sensitive plate requires development. And this is the work of mind or thought or reason. The idea of law, for example, under which the scientist ranges his phenomena, is a thing which he has not derived from the empiric data in themselves. It is a thing which belongs to another realm of being. And it has come to him, not from the objective material of experience, but from the world of ideas which is the home of the human reason. It is quite an axiom nowadays to say that, if the universe of matter is knowable at all, it must be in virtue of something beyond itself. Naked materialism is unthinkable. A "Natural Law" is a thing which belongs primarily to the realm of mind,

Based as it is on the data of physical experience, nevertheless it comes to birth within the human brain. The laws of Nature are not entities which inhere in the phenomena of the objective world—they are uniformities which have been detected by the human intellect. And, therefore, if they are more than subjective, they witness to the reality of a Mind in Nature Which is kindred to the minds of men. In short, unless the universe of material phenomena is the product of a Directing and Sustaining Intelligence, it cannot be said to be a reality at all. For the real is the rational, as the rational the real. As soon, therefore, as we begin to analyse the meaning of "Natural Law," we find ourselves carried beyond the field of the orthodox scientist.

Passing, then, from the data of physical science to the being of man, we come within sight of the real problem. Man's place in Nature is indeed the great battle-field of modern thought. More and more fully have we been learning of recent years that man is "the Child of Nature." If there are still some gaps in the chain of scientific evidence, the links are being discovered by degrees and forged into their rightful place. In the words of the late Aubrey Moore, science is "gradually tracing in ever clearer outline the steps which lead upward from inorganic matter to the creature who can think and will and worship." Not only our bodily organisms, but all the varied faculties of the human spirit, are being seen to have arisen by an uninterrupted process of development from within. The moral law, however—which we find to exist at the centre of our being—is quite as real to us as any of those which regulate and control our physical frame, and the moral sense as valid a channel of knowledge as any of our physical senses. A Kingdom of Righteousness is disclosed to us in our conscience, and it claims an absolute supremacy. Nor can its imperative be explained merely by describing

the process of its historic growth. If morality has arisen in the midst of human civilisation, it is not, therefore, nothing more than a product of social intercourse. For to recount the story of its evolution is not necessarily the same thing as to lay bare its essence. Among the laws of Nature stands the moral law; and, while the moral order is based upon the physical, it also transcends it. Of course, we need not think of the physical and the moral worlds "as two opposing spheres, of which the one dominates the other, but as the less perfect and the more perfect revelation of the Nature of God." If it is the Mind of God Which lies at the back of all Nature, it is His Will Which is embodied in all her laws, ethical, physical, and intellectual. While He transcends Nature, He is also Immanent in Nature. And His Will is the source, ultimate and immediate, of all her energy and its imperative. Nevertheless, our conscience tells us that the Mind and Will in Nature are those of a Righteous Being. And such a truth, as we ponder it, illuminates the meaning of all His activity. For if He is "Goodness," or "the Good," He must want to enlighten our minds and strengthen our wills, so that we may be more able to understand and fulfil the law of our own being. And our spiritual experience of struggle and recovery must be the reflex of His Influence.

There is a unique difference, however, in the relation in which we find ourselves standing towards the physical order on the one hand and the moral upon the other. Although both may be equally inexorable in themselves, they are not equally inviolate for humanity. We cannot disobey the law of gravitation—we can disobey the laws of truth, or purity, or honour. In the realm of ethics we may be "lawless" indeed. And "sin is lawlessness." It is, literally, a violation of Natural law. If the laws of Nature are but the active manifestation of a Righteous Mind and Will, all that is unrighteous is Unnatural. Moral evil is not the product

of law, but its contradiction. That man is simply "the creature of circumstance" is a figment which is denied by all human experience. Good and bad character is not a matter of necessity. Heredity and environment account for something: yet we know ourselves to be more than their offspring. There is that within us by which we can rise above the forces of evil, and also fall below the forces of good. We are all conscious at times of a clash at the very centre of our being, an opposition between our ideal and our attainment, a discord in the harmony of mind and will. And the testimony of our noblest moments makes us refuse to believe that this disorder is permanent and inevitable. As the poet retorts—

" 'I follow Nature' ! follow Nature still,
But see it be thine own. Is conscience then
No part of Nature? Is not she supreme?
Thou regicide ! first raise her from the dead ?
Then, follow Nature ! "

Here is the real heart of the problem. The failure of "Naturalism," as it is called, in the realm of ethics and psychology, is as striking as its success in the realm of physics. Modern science, which has done so much to illuminate the material universe, has done nothing for the moral being of man. Progressive minds are therefore becoming impatient at its overweening claims. They demand a rational respect for that devotion to ideals, which the "naturalistic" philosophy must regard as a pitiful delusion. An age, in which ethical interests are again coming to the front, cannot long be content with a creed which frowns upon all enthusiasm and mocks at any form of spiritual aspiration. And so we now find that "Naturalism" is losing its disciples. For the fact of moral evil is indeed the rock upon which, if they refuse to utilise the gift of Revelation, all systems of philosophic thought

are bound to split. Sin is the disturbing element in the universe ; and it continues to defy all rational analysis, because it is itself irrational. Despite "Naturalism," there is, so-to-say, a "contingent matter" in the Cosmos ; for the Natural Order of the Universe has been outraged by man's rebellion. Yet our moral instincts, as well as our intellectual longings, impel us to look forward to a final harmony. The real Order of Nature—unless both reason and conscience are to stultify themselves—must be the order of a really "cosmic" process, which includes the ethical within itself. To the Christian it is to be found in the Advent of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

For it is from a moral standpoint, as Dr. Gore once pointed out in a memorable lecture, that the Person of Jesus Christ is in truth "profoundly Natural." The term "Supernatural," as he says, "is purely relative to that which at any particular stage of thought we mean by Nature." The moral world itself is "Supernatural" from the point of view of the physical, just as the organic is "Supernatural" from the point of view of the inorganic. And if modern science is gradually completing the chain of "Natural" evolution, it is merely showing how at one and the same time all is Supernatural also. But to those who see in human sin a violation of Natural law, the "Miracle" of the Person of Jesus Christ is no longer an intellectual stumbling-block. If His Incarnation and Resurrection involve an "interference" with the normal operation of those uniformities which have been discovered to pervade the material universe, they were undertaken on behalf of "the Supreme Uniformity—the Eternal Law of Right and Wrong"—with which human personalities had already interfered. Thus, His Personality is no longer "miraculous," for the only "miracle" is human sin. The purpose of the Advent of Jesus Christ was remedial and restorative. The disease of human sin had brought a chaos into the Divine System

of the Cosmos. It had broken the Righteous Order of God's Government. And therefore our Lord came to recreate humanity in His Kingdom. He died just in order to bring all things under the sway of God's Dominion, and to re-establish the harmony of Heaven on earth. Without the Cross the Universal Reign of Law is a chimera ; with it, it is the greatest of all certainties.

Here, then, is the method by which a rational theology is bringing the Supernatural World of Spirit within the domain of Natural law. Not only has the war been carried into the enemy's country, but the whole area of his territory has been annexed. Hitherto—as was noticed by the late Mr. Romanes—"the distinction between the Natural and the Supernatural has always been regarded by both sides as indisputably sound, and this fundamental agreement as to the ground of battle has furnished the only possible condition to the fight." So the campaign has been ended by simply reversing the argument of the traditional Apologetic. For the question, "Is the Supernatural Natural, or Unnatural?" cannot be answered until the term "Nature" has been defined. And it is the extent of Nature's area, rather than its content, that the modern Apologist has to defend. A thing is not "unnatural" because it only happens once in history. On the contrary, in nothing absolutely can history "repeat itself;" while all that is truly real in human history must be included within "Nature." No longer does the Christian attempt to dam back the progress of "Naturalism," or to stay the conquest of "Natural Law" over every department of life and thought. Barrier after barrier has given way. And the break down of the ancient lines of fortification does but serve to show that religion is not intended to shrink within some ultimate citadel of philosophic nescience, but to go forth and illuminate all the provinces of scientific knowledge with a light from Heaven. For religion is itself a knowledge

—the beginning and the end of all moral and rational activity—in that it is the intuitive apperception of Him Who is Alpha and Omega to human thought. Thus, the Apologist of to-day opens the gate of his fortress to his *quondam* enemy, and invites him to make a rational investigation of its bulwarks and its spiritual artillery. We who are Christians see in the work of all students of Nature, whether in ethics or in physics, a series of attempts to disclose the methods of God's operation. And so we say to her disciples that, if only they will be true to the object of their study and adoration, they will find themselves among the worshippers of Jesus Christ. The phenomena of religion are no longer to be neglected. The subjective as well as the objective requires a scientific explanation. There is a challenge in the facts of personal experience. Nor can such data be empirically understood by any save the individual himself. To analyse spiritual experience from the outside is to miss its essence amid its accidents. Only a believer can believe. And the testimony of the Christian consciousness is the sole evidence to which an appeal can be justly made.

Are we, then, who are already among the disciples of Jesus Christ, justified in our belief that He is the *Minister atque Interpres Naturæ*? Etymologically, the term "Nature" is akin to the Greek "Genesis." It seems to involve, as part of its proper significance, the idea of birth, or origin, or creation. "The Natural Order of the Universe" may be taken to be the Order of its Creation, the ideal Order of its birth, its original Order. "Nature" is generally identified with reality, with the sum total of positive things, with all that can truly be said to be. It contains more than the physical universe. It embraces within itself the mind and will of the human spirit, together with all the phenomena that have manifested themselves in human history. In the words of a Scotch Professor,

"If we say, 'All that is, is Nature,' we must include in our conception of Nature the spiritual ideals as well as the material necessities of men. But, if so, it is inconsistent to deny Intelligence or a Spiritual Principle in Nature, since this intelligence or spiritual principle shows itself in human beings." And Mr. Ritchie goes on to say that it is scientifically illegitimate to "regard man as entirely within Nature, and yet to exclude from Nature—in the widest sense of the term—the highest intelligence and the highest goodness that have shown themselves in man." Now, by all who are Christians, "the highest intelligence and the highest goodness that have shown themselves" in humanity are recognised to have come to a focus in the Personality of the Son of Man. And since the experiences of sages and of saints is to be comprehended under the word "Nature," the witness of all Christendom to Jesus Christ is a valid testimony to Him as the Spiritual Intelligence of the Universe. The influence which men have attributed to Him, combined with moral results which it has indubitably produced, is by far the most unique phenomenon in history. To banish it from the realm of positive fact, or to dismiss it with an *à priori* dogma, is altogether unscientific. The student of Nature must always commence his investigations with a careful survey of the situation. He must be ready to abandon prejudice. He must adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the subject-matter of his inquiry. And the only explanation of Jesus Christ, which is truly "natural," because it alone is empirically cognisant of all the facts, is that He is the Eternal Foundation on Whom the Christian Church is built.

But it is urged, why is the "Miracle" of His Divine Personality required? An Apotheosis may be a popular convenience; but can we not be content to adore the Humanity of "the Friend of Man?" Such a proposal, however, does not take account of the real crux of the

problem. The fact of moral evil may be a fact of history and of experience; yet it can justly be said to be not a fact of Nature. If Nature is "all that is," all evil is Unnatural. For we cannot think that evil will always be. A faith in the ultimate triumph of Right is one of those fundamental convictions, without which the fabric of society would immediately collapse. And the future victory of the Eternal Righteousness, in order to be a present hope, must have a retrospective significance, and be also a reality of to-day. Our instinctive trust

"that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,"

is not a logical conclusion drawn from terrestrial data, but rather an intuition that gives a hint of the celestial destiny of the Universe and ourselves. All optimists have raised their eyes, perhaps unconsciously, from earth to Heaven. Nor can any ladder of escape be found from an irrational dualism in ethics, unless we climb upward through the Humanity to the Divinity of the Son of Man. To the Christian, sin is the only thing that is Unnatural in all the world; while it is ever being "taken away" by faith in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is in His Kingdom that the "Natural" Order for the human race is gradually being realised, in so far as men learn to submit their minds and wills to the One Who alone can make them free. For it is He Who restores the being of man to moral harmony and peace. Without Him there is no final unity in sight; there is no present unity.

But, lastly, it may be said, is not all this merely an ingenious afterthought? Why is it necessary to introduce the Christian's *deus ex machina*? Can we not perceive a moral order and progress in the "natural" evolution of the human race? Assuredly we can; yet it is only because there standeth One amongst us Whom we do not recognise.

It is altogether impossible to get beyond the confines of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Whether or no we believe in the Personality of Jesus Christ, the influence of His Spirit is around us. For the mind and conscience of humanity as a whole have long been carried to the Throne of God. It is only the eye of faith that can perceive what are the "natural" and what are the "unnatural" elements in our modern environment. Here the Sacraments of the Church find their proper function. They are the outward and visible signs of the world's redemption. They draw before us the outline of a moral ideal, which is to be realised by the response of faith. They make manifest the spiritual diagram of human life. It was not our physical birth which ushered us into the Natural Order of the Universe; for we brought with us a heritage of evil from the past. Our second Birth at the Font of the Catholic Church brought us into vital contact with God's System—the Order of the World's Creation—in which we find the true sphere of exercise for all our spiritual faculties. The "Natural" life for every human being is indeed an adaptation to the redemptive powers and forces, that are stored within the Sacramental Organism of the Church.

III

MODERN CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THERE is still some disquietude among the orthodox about the Higher Criticism of the Bible, especially in reference to the New Testament. And it finds something of an explanation in the tactics which have been employed by the critics themselves. There is a noticeable difference in the method by which the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures, respectively, have been treated by the generality of modern scholars. The Higher Criticism of the Old Testament has been on the whole more scientific than that of the New. It has been more truly an inductive study of literature. The Hebrew scholars have relied upon linguistic and archæological facts, rather than upon imaginative pre-suppositions of their own. And for the last fifty years they have been steadily building up a substantial edifice. In the case of the New Testament, however, the course of modern criticism has been more wayward. It has been more subject to the vagaries of philosophic doctrinaires ; so that it is only within recent years that any results which can be called stable have been secured. The Higher Criticism of the New Testament started in an atmosphere redolent of an *a priori* dogma, from which some Continental schools appear to be still unable to escape. "Miracles are impossible ; *ergo*, all records of miracle are historically untrue"—such is the undertone which sounds throughout the works of

the pioneer critics of the New Testament. And it obviously militates against their historical and scientific candour. Yet much has changed since the days of Strauss and Renan. Several literary fragments have been unearthed. Archaeologists have been at work in Asia Minor and the Holy Land. The date of the Christian documents has been brought nearer and nearer to the time of Jesus Christ, and the Apostolic authorship of the majority is being gradually confirmed. There has been a reaction against the speculative fancies of Dr. Baur and his pupils. And if the fundamental undertone remains amongst several of the modern scholars, there is also a large number of distinguished critics who are devout and orthodox Christians.

What is the real function of the science of Biblical Criticism? After all, it is only a literary function, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not at stake. The problem presented by the date and authorship of the Christian documents is an important problem. But we must not exaggerate its importance, and lose our heads. We have no cause whatsoever to quake in our shoes in anticipation of the "latest results" of the Higher Criticism in Germany or elsewhere. The testimony upon which we who are Christians have based our faith is not purely a matter of literary evidence. It is the joint product of three factors—of the individual consciousness, and of the ecclesiastical tradition, as well as of the documentary record. And the last of the trio is also the latest in actual time. Even if the New Testament had never been written at all, the Gospel of Jesus Christ would still be with us; for it preceded the literary narrative of its origin. All history must be a retrospect. It cannot be too often repeated that the production of the New Testament was but an incident in the history of the early Church, and that for many a generation she preached the Gospel without the aid of any authorised Canon of Christian Scriptures. The

Bible with which she started was not the New Testament, but the Old; which was long considered adequate in itself to make the members of the Christian Society "wise unto salvation." The faith of Christendom is not a thing which has been gradually picked up out of a number of fragmentary relics of literature which happen to have survived from the Apostolic age. To make the Church and the Gospel of Jesus Christ dependent upon the Bible, is to invert the order of history. For the New Testament is not the doctrinal basis of Catholicism—it is a commentary on the faith which the Catholic Church has held from the beginning. And without the key of her creed it becomes an "author of confusion." It is indeed a strange failure of the historic sense which has led men to overlook this fundamental factor in the situation. Just as the Protestant controversialist neglects the ecclesiastical element (while he emphasises the individual), so, too, the Rationalist critic forgets both the one and the other, and treats the problem of the New Testament solely as a matter of literary criticism. Of course, documents must be judged by the canons of documentary evidence, and by them alone. Yet sympathy is the prerequisite of every critic of literature, no less than of every commentator. No one but a poet can understand a poet. And in order to understand aright the age of the Apostles, we must be in sympathy with their Gospel and with the heritage of its spiritual posterity.

Here is the historic advantage which belongs to the position of the English Church. The Reformation took a different course in England from that which it followed in Germany and elsewhere, and has resulted in a difference in our "psychological climate." We who are English Churchmen can study the New Testament from the standpoint of historical affinity. For we are still in touch with the Apostolic age. And it is not merely an "insular prejudice," I think, which makes us feel that our point of view is the

more scientific. The Rationalist critics on the Continent—like the Protestant Nonconformists at home—are looking at the New Testament through spectacles which they have manufactured for themselves. On the other hand, we are trusting to the evidence of our native sight. For the New Testament is the product of our spiritual ancestry, and we know ourselves to be linked, historically and spiritually, by an indissoluble chain to Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Biblical criticism, therefore, does not assume in our eyes an importance greater than it deserves. We welcome the aid of the Higher Critics, so long as they keep within their proper sphere. We are glad to learn from them all that they have to tell us about the date and authorship of the documents of the New Testament. But when they go on to dogmatise about its interpretation, they have stepped beyond the province of literary analysis, and we refuse to follow them. In short, we trust them as critics, but not as commentators or as theologians. In a recent letter to an English scholar, Dr. Harnack expresses the hope that he and his correspondent will find themselves in agreement with regard to questions of chronology, and that their differences will henceforward appear in their interpretation of the Books of the New Testament, rather than in the problem presented by their age and authenticity. Such is, to my mind, precisely the point of the situation. I venture, therefore, to add one or two illustrations of the present state of modern criticism. To review it in detail is beyond the reach of all but experts. It may be useful, however, to state some of the facts which are now being established, adding one or two comments derived from critical theologians in the English Church.

Let us begin with the letters of the Apostle Paul. The authenticity of four of them—the Epistles to the Galatians, to the Romans, and to the Church at Corinth—has never been impugned by any serious critic. Dr. Baur himself

recognised them as genuine. But the Pauline authorship of several of the rest is now admitted. Even Renan could positively reject only the Pastoral Epistles. First, then, the letter to Philippi, the letter to Philemon, and the earlier letter to Thessalonica were considered to be genuine. Afterwards, Colossians was included in the list. And now Ephesians, and the second letter to the Thessalonians, are being owned as authentic even by some of the extreme school. If the Pastoral Epistles are still confidently rejected by many critics, their conclusions seem to be based upon a dislike of their teaching about the organisation of the Apostolic Church as much as upon grounds which are purely literary. In short, it is no exaggeration to say that, with the exception of the letters to Timothy and Titus—and, of course, the Epistle to the Hebrews—the orthodox tradition about the rest of the Pauline documents is now seen to be not uncritical. (One or two Dutch scholars, it is true, have recently attempted to revive the older scepticism : but their views appear to be universally repudiated by English and American critics.) Nor is there much controversy about the date of the majority of the letters. The earliest are probably the Epistles to the Thessalonians, which seem to have been composed in 51 A.D. Then comes the group written from Ephesus—the Galatians, the Romans, and both of the Corinthians—which may be confidently assigned to the years 55 and 56 A.D. And lastly we have another quartette—Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon—probably belonging to the years 60 and 61 A.D., which were spent by the Apostle in captivity at Rome.

Apart from the Pastoral Epistles, then, we have a series of ten letters, dating from a period within two or three decades of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is the subject-matter with which they deal? The pair of letters to Thessalonica are of a personal and hortatory character. But the evidence of both of the later groups

is strongly dogmatic. The Apostle does not dwell upon the moral teaching of Jesus Christ : he makes no reference to any of His parables or miracles or sermons, but dwells upon the mighty issues wrought out by His Death and Resurrection for the human race. In the earlier series, the author discusses the relation between the Law and the Gospel—the first practical difficulty of the Christian Society—the reality of human sin, the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and the worship of the Church. The second quartette of letters is almost wholly Christological. Philippians has a reminiscence of the earlier controversy, and Philemon is a private note. But Colossians and Ephesians treat in detail of the Person of Jesus Christ as the foundation of the moral theology of Catholicism. And all this evidence goes back to within thirty years of the Day of Pentecost.

Pass now to the Synoptic Gospels and the narrative of the Apostolic Acts. Here we reach a more intricate problem, yet only to find a striking confirmation of the orthodox tradition. Who was the author of the Acts of the Apostles? It is confessed by every critic that he was also the compiler of the last of the Synoptic Gospels. Yet it used to be thought that the Acts was a product of the second century. Those sections of the narrative in which the historian uses the word “we” in the Pauline journeys, were held to be memoranda made by some fellow-traveller of the Apostle ; and they were supposed to have been inserted at a later date into a fictitious narrative, intended to present a story of the early Church from a Pauline standpoint. But recent archæology, as well as recent criticism, has gone to disprove such a theory. The style and language of these sections of personal narrative cannot be distinguished from the rest of the Book. The first five chapters are probably based upon a Jewish document ; yet the book as a whole is by one hand, as well as by the same hand as the third of the Synoptics. And the laborious research of Professor

Ramsay—who began his work with a preconception against the result to which he has been led—has demonstrated the delicate accuracy of the language employed by the author of the Acts, and his remarkable knowledge of political nomenclature and topography. It is indeed almost impossible, alike on critical and archæological grounds, to assume that the writer can have been any other than the physician and Evangelist who was so often attached to the staff of the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

Starting from this ground, we approach the problem of the Synoptic Gospels. Luke the Evangelist tells us that he has had predecessors in the work of compiling a biography of Jesus Christ; and the fact is obvious to every reader. When we compare the first three Gospels with one another, we find that they have much in common—common material, common language, and common arrangement. There is much that is common to all three of them, or to one of the three pairs in the trio. Did they borrow from one another, or from other narratives which are no longer in existence? And, if so, to what extent? How to account for their similarity, combined as it is with much variation and differences that are exceedingly minute, is “the Synoptic Problem.” Dr. Sanday’s hope of an ultimate solution is still far distant. Yet there are several points which criticism may be said to have established. For example, almost the whole of Mark’s material is found both in Matthew and Luke, or in one of them. The order of events also in Mark, and his phraseology, are preserved either in one or both. It is therefore practically certain that Mark was employed by the other two. Again, that which is found both in Matthew and Luke, but not in Mark, is derived in part from the oral tradition of the Church, but also from an earlier document: almost the whole of those sections of discourses in Matthew, which are not based on Mark, seem to belong to this document. And, again, Luke,

as well as Matthew, has made use of the lost document of discourses. Some critics believe that he had also before him a third narrative upon which he set much value. Even if he had three literary sources of information, he was also, like Mark, a direct debtor to tradition.

And this leads us on to the question of their date. Mark, of course, is the earliest of the trio. Dr. Harnack assigns it to 65-70 A.D., the period between the Neronian persecution at Rome and the fall of Jerusalem. Its traditional origin has been confirmed. Papias—who was Bishop of Hierapolis in the early part of the second century—says that “Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately all he remembered of the things that were either said or done by Christ; but, however, not in order. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor follow Him. But afterwards he attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the immediate wants of his hearers, but not as giving a connected narrative of the Lord’s discourses.” The speeches of an Apostle whose native tongue was a provincial dialect of Hebrew, would require interpretation to Greek audiences: and it is almost certain that John Mark, who went off with Barnabas after his rupture with Paul, had travelled for some time with Peter before being reconciled to Paul at Rome. Irenæus says that, after the death of the two great Apostles, “Mark delivered to us in writing the things which had been preached by Peter.” It may be said to be indubitable that, shortly after the year 65 A.D.—the traditional date of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul at Rome—our earliest Gospel was composed by John Mark to be a reminiscence of the Petrine teaching. Of the other pair of Synoptic Evangelists—which assumed their present form at a time when they were independent of one another—Luke appears to be the later of the two. His Gospel must precede his Acts of the Apostles. Yet although the latter ends before the death of Paul, it seems not to have

been composed till after the Neronian persecution. Its close is so abrupt, in comparison with its formal preface, that the author probably intended to add a third treatise, or to continue in his second the history of the Church to a point beyond the martyrdom of his two great heroes. And it is quite possible that he did not begin his literary work until after the fall of Jerusalem. Harnack proposes the years 78-93 A.D. as the limits within which the Gospel lies. But it may well have been written shortly after 70 A.D. If the Acts may be assigned with some confidence to 75-80 A.D., the Gospel may be as early as 70-75 A.D. And it is not unlikely that it was composed at Rome; where Luke would have been able to derive much information from John Mark in person, as well as from his Gospel. While Mark is a record of the Petrine Gospel, Luke contains rather the teaching of the Apostle Paul. The origin of the Evangel attributed to Matthew is more difficult to ascertain. Its date is assigned by Harnack to 70-75 A.D., except for some later additions. Papias relates that Matthew wrote "the Oracles of the Lord" in Hebrew, or possibly in Aramaic. The Greek document of discourses, used by Luke and the author of Matthew, may well have been originally written in Hebrew or in Aramaic: and that Matthew the Apostle was its author, is more than a plausible conjecture. Our first Gospel was certainly intended for the special benefit of Hebrew disciples. If its Apostolic authorship cannot be affirmed, it is based upon ultimate sources that are certainly Apostolic.

There is little need, then, to be discontented with the Higher Criticism of the Synoptics. All the critics maintain that they are a genuine product of the first century. Harnack—a typical representative of the Continental school—places the trio between 65 and 93 A.D., holding that the primary document now extant cannot be later than 70 A.D. And apart from the internal evidence—which in

numerous details provides many a remarkable corroboration of their historic truth—their general character is bound to make a deep impress upon the reader. Study the Marcan Gospel as a whole: let its story grow upon you; and then ask yourself how its unlearned author was able to pen it, unless it contains a portrait drawn immediately from life. Note the candour of Matthew, who says that “some doubted” the fact of the Resurrection, and ask yourself if this can be an attempt to inculcate credulity. Read the calm and almost prosaic narrative of the Resurrection, as recorded by each of the trio, and ask yourself whether it is the product of a heated ecstasy of imagination. Above all, watch the Character That is gradually unfolded to you in this triple record, note its Originality, study His Acts, and ponder His Sayings. And then ask yourself if you are not ready to join in the confession, which John Mark puts upon the lips of him who was probably the first convert to the faith among the Gentiles—“Truly this Man was the Son of God.”

A few words must be added about the fourth Gospel; for it has been the scene of the greatest battle of modern criticism. Baur conjectured that it was written in 170 A.D. by some one who forged the Apostle's name. But half a century has witnessed a “*volte-face*.” Hilgenfeld placed it between 120 and 140 A.D. Then Renan set it in 120 A.D., assigning it to the Presbyter called John. Harnack gives it to the same author, but dates it between 80 and 110 A.D. For in 1876 was discovered a translation of a commentary upon a “Harmony of Four Gospels,” which had long been known to have been written by Tatian in 160 A.D.; while in 1886 a version of the Harmony itself was found. It is now certain that Tatian's work was a combination of the four Gospels which we possess. Justin Martyr, about 150 A.D., mentions the existence of Apostolic “Memoirs, which are called Gospels,” and says that they

“had been compiled by Christ’s Apostles and those who companied with them”—which would be a more accurate description of our present quartette than of the trio of the Synoptics by themselves. And Irenæus, a pupil of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John, says that the Church accepted four Gospels, not more and not less, as genuine and authentic. Writing to a friend, he tells him how Polycarp would “describe his intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord and about His miracles, Polycarp, as having received them from eyewitnesses of the Life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures.” Indeed, the external testimony to the Apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel is peculiarly strong. John the Apostle is known to have lived to a great age, and to have died at Ephesus about 98 A.D. On the chronological limits, therefore, proposed by Harnack, he may well be the author of the book. The last chapter is obviously an addition, and its last verse but one cannot have been written by the author: it is more than probable that the chapter was added at the request of the Ephesian elders, who themselves penned the closing words of authentication. But throughout his treatise the writer shows so minute an acquaintance with Jewish feasts and customs and with Palestinian topography, that he can hardly have been other than a devout native of the Holy Land. Dr. Sanday and the late Dr. Westcott are both drawn irresistibly to the conclusion that he was none other than the beloved Apostle.

Of John the Presbyter, to whom Renan and Harnack have assigned the book, little is known. Papias, writing about 130 A.D., says that when any one came to him who had been a follower of the elders, he used to inquire about their discourses—“what Andrew and what Peter said, or

what Philip, or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew or any other of the disciples of the Lord; and the things which Aristion and John the Presbyter, the disciples of the Lord, say." The Presbyter seems to have been an elder contemporary of Papias, and to have had personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ. He probably lived for some time at Ephesus. But that Ephesus was the final home and resting place of John the Apostle, is a fact which rests upon much stronger evidence.

The real problem of the fourth Gospel, however, is not simply critical. It is no longer one of date and authorship, or even of the details of its internal characteristics. It concerns its historic matter as a whole. The contrast which it presents to the Synoptic Gospels is profound. Let me quote from a recent publication by an English scholar. "Instead of a plain narrative setting forth facts, or summarily recording discourses, and forbearing almost entirely from comment, we have a view of our Lord's life as it were from within; which puts it in relation to the whole history of human experiences, and presents it as a manifestation to men of a Divine Father through a Divine Son, Who has entered into humanity in order to lift men into fellowship with God. While the other Gospels offer a narrative intelligible to readers who may be quite unacquainted beforehand with the general story, the fourth Gospel assumes from the outset and to the close that those who read it will be familiar with the chief characters and incidents of the history, and will welcome the disclosure of its inner meaning. And not only do the old characters appear in new situations, but the utterances of all the speakers seem to bear another impress: there is on the one hand a tone of perpetual inquiry, and on the other a continuous revelation of mysterious truths. . . . It is this contrast which makes us feel that we have entered another region altogether from that of the chroniclers of our Lord's

deeds and words—a region of prophetic revelation, in which we are made to gaze upon the eternal realities which underlie the transitory shapes of human experience, and manifest themselves through signs and through speech in the life of the Word made Flesh.” Nor is it just to say that the emphatic proclamation of our Lord’s Divinity in the fourth Gospel is that which has led many of the Higher Critics to impugn its historical character. Undoubtedly some have been influenced on *à priori* grounds. But there are others who, though altogether convinced of the truth of the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ, yet “cannot easily persuade themselves that the fourth Gospel offers them history quite in the sense that the other Gospels do.” It is not that facts have been distorted by the writer, but his record of our Lord’s sayings may well be due to a reminiscence long matured in an atmosphere of theological reflection. He has given us, perhaps, not so much a direct report of what was actually said, but rather that which prolonged contemplation and experience has enabled him to find in his Master’s utterances.

The problem of historic criticism which is thus raised is one of extreme subtlety. It can only be approached after years of patient study, and it demands from the intellect a capacity of severe restraint no less than a powerful elasticity. For the mental picture of Jesus Christ, with which we all approach the New Testament, is one that we have traditionally derived from each and all of the four Gospels. It is exceedingly hard to reconstruct the Synoptic Portrait by itself, combining its Marcan and non-Markan features, and then to preserve the critical result in intellectual isolation during the study of the Figure disclosed in the fourth narrative, and finally to proceed to a comparison. Dean Robinson says that if the student, captivated by the symmetry and coherence of the Synoptic story, goes on to estimate its relation to the later record, he will find that

he "must either deny the strictly historical character of the new details furnished by the fourth Gospel; or else he must bring himself to recognise that the completeness of his earlier conception is illusory, that he has hitherto viewed only from one standpoint a life which now proves to be larger and more complex than he had supposed, and that, in fact, this life has revealed itself only to a mature reflection and a loving insight." Dr. Westcott reached the latter alternative. The subject matter of the fourth Gospel, he says, is not at variance with the other three, but complementary to them. The result of prolonged and laborious thought is that the student finds an harmonious and intelligible unity underlying all external distinctions, and thus regains with greater completion of detail that idea of a consistent whole with which traditionally he started. To all of us, I think, it is obvious that age and experience would enable a disciple to see more and more of "the Truth as it is in Jesus." And the author of the fourth Gospel has not been drawing upon his own imagination, but penetrating further and further into the meaning of the Master's Personality. Even Matthew Arnold felt that the Christ was above the heads of His biographers. And all history is showing us that the significance of His Advent is inexhaustible, and only to be grasped by slow degrees.

THE END

2.22.5

2- 12409

BX	Knight Rational re- ligion. 229105
5133	
K7R2	
1903	
	2- 12409

229105

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



48 452 146